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Inside

AIR FORCE

Nuclear officers' test scores dropped during alleged cheating period

Page 8



MILITARY

Soldier killed, 7 injured during howitzer training exercise on Fort Bragg

Page 7

OLYMPICS

US men's hockey team leaves Sochi empty-handed

Page 31



WORLD

Protesters take control of Ukrainian capital, seize president's office

Page 13



24 to get Medals of Honor

Overdue awards go to minority members following Army discrimination review

By PATRICK DICKSON
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama will award the Medal of Honor to 24 Army veterans for conspicuous gallantry, correcting what was in some cases decades of discrimination.

These veterans will be honored for their valor during major combat operations in World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War, the White House announced late Friday.

Among the recipients will be 19 Hispanic, Jewish and African-American veterans overlooked previously because of their racial or ethnic backgrounds.

They will be honored in a ceremony

INSIDE

- List of the recipients
- Fla. man shocked by medal news 40 years later
Page 3
- Hagel refuses to reopen medal bid for Marine
Page 4



at the White House on March 18.

Each had previously been recognized with the Distinguished Service Cross, the nation's second highest military award; that award will be upgraded to the Medal

of Honor in recognition of their gallantry, intrepidity and heroism above and beyond the call of duty.

In 2002, Congress, through the Defense Authorization Act, called for a review of Jewish-American and Hispanic-American veteran war records from these wars, to ensure those deserving the Medal of Honor were not denied because of prejudice.

During the review, records of several white soldiers were also found to display criteria worthy of the Medal of Honor. The 2002 act was amended to allow these soldiers to be honored with the upgrade — in addition to the Jewish and Hispanic American soldiers.

SEE HONOR ON PAGE 3

PUTTING THEIR WOUNDS ON ICE

Injured veterans relish the rewards of teamwork in hockey | Page 6



BILL O'LEARY/The Washington Post

Army Sgt. Kevin Gatson says hockey replicates the teamwork he knew in the field and is "more of a workout than I had anticipated." Next month, sled hockey will be featured as a sport at the 2014 Paralympic Winter Games in Sochi, Russia.

Marines in Helmand help Georgians become fighting force

By JENNIFER HLAD
Stars and Stripes

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan — As dozens of Marines across Helmand province advise and assist Afghan forces, a

small group of Marines is focused on a different group: a Georgian light infantry battalion.

The Georgian Liaison Team — about 90 Marines from different East Coast-based units — teaches, advises, mentors

and participates in operations with the 750 soldiers of the 31st Georgian Light Infantry Battalion. The battalion is part of the task force charged with security of the sprawling Camp Leatherneck

and Camp Bastion complex.

The nation of Georgia has sent 11 rotations of troops to Afghanistan including three tours in Helmand province by the light infantry battalion.

SEE GEORGIANS ON PAGE 2

QUOTE

OF THE DAY

"It's not every day that you see someone covered in blood screaming at the window at city hall."

— Police Chief Ken Barnes, of Alturas, Calif., recounting the scene after a suspect shot and killed four people during a tribal Indian meeting near city hall.

See story on Page 10

TOP CLICKS

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The most popular stories on our website:

1. Soldier killed, 7 hurt in training exercise on Fort Bragg
2. Obama to award 24 Medals of Honor
3. Rafael Peralta: Hagel declines to reopen Marine's Medal of Honor case
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5. Former general: Forget the sword; Jesus will return with an AR-15

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SOON



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TODAY

IN STRIPES

American Roundup	12
Books	19
Business	21
Comics	18
Crossword	18
Lifestyle	15
Movies	20
Music	16-17
Opinion	22-23
Sports	24-32
Weather	21

MILITARY

Georgians: Nation's troops gain experience with Marines' help

FROM FRONT PAGE

During those rotations, Georgian troops spent their deployments engaged in combat operations out of forward operating bases in northern Helmand province. These troops are running patrols, manning guard towers and sending out quick-reaction forces around Camp Leatherneck, with the help of their Marine advisers.

Staff Sgt. Robert Plemmons, who came to the Georgian Liaison Team from II Marine Expeditionary Force at Camp Lejeune, N.C., works with Georgian company-level staff. He said the Georgians plan the missions with the Marines' advice and support, then the Marines go out with the Georgian troops, assisting at "friction points" wherever necessary.

Those friction points might be a location where an IED was spotted, the search area of a vehicle checkpoint, a shura, or any other situation when there is the potential for something to go wrong, said Capt. Jonathan Lucas, who joined the Georgian Liaison Team from the training instructor group of Marine Corps Security Cooperation Group in Virginia Beach, Va.

The Marines also act as liaisons for air support, explosive ordnance disposal and other supporting units, Plemmons said.

"We play the middleman a lot," he said.

Plemmons has served as an adviser for Iraqi, Afghan and Jordanian forces, as well as the forces of several African countries, he said. But in each of those cases, the advising was done in the troops' home country. Advising the Georgians in Afghanistan means dealing with the usual cultural differences — in a war zone, Plemmons said.

Georgian forces first deployed to Afghanistan in 2004, when one company serving under a German unit provided security for the elections that made Hamid Karzai president, said Irakli Gurgendize, chief of public affairs for the Georgian unit. The first Georgian battalion came to Helmand province under Regional Command Southwest in 2010, and by last year had two 750-man battalions in the province, in Now Zad and Musa Qala, Gurgendize said.

In a few months, another battalion will replace the 31st Battalion



JENNIFER HLAID/Stars and Stripes

From left, U.S. Marine Cpl. Parker Fletcher, interpreter Temur Okruashvili and Georgian Army mechanic Gocha Ushveridze work together to repair an MRAP recently in the Georgian vehicle maintenance shop at Camp Leatherneck.

in RC-Southwest, and a second battalion of Georgian rangers will go to Kandahar to serve under RC-South, Gurgendize said.

"It is in our interest to have as many troops here as possible," so they can gain combat experience, Gurgendize said.

As of mid-January, Georgia was contributing more troops to the Afghanistan effort than any other non-NATO nation and was fifth behind the U.S., the U.K., Germany and Italy for total troops in the country, despite having a population of slightly less than 5 million.

A republic the size of West Virginia in the troubled Caucasus mountains, Georgia tangled with neighboring Russia over two separatist regions in 2008. Some Russian troops remain in those regions, which are on Georgian soil.

Georgia is seeking full membership in NATO — which Russia opposes — and has pledged troops and financial support for Afghan national security forces after 2014.

To help lower some of the cul-

tural barriers, a portion of the Marine team formed in January 2013 to learn advisory skills and the Georgian language before some traveled to Georgia in May to train with the battalion, Lucas said.

The Marines and Georgian troops then traveled to Germany in August for a battalion training exercise at Hohenfels. They deployed to Afghanistan at the end of September, Lucas said.

Cpl. Parker Fletcher came from 2nd Maintenance Battalion at Camp Lejeune, N.C., and joined the Georgian battalion as the maintenance shop chief when it arrived in Afghanistan. The maintenance shop has six U.S. Marine and six Georgian mechanics, and intermingling was difficult at first, Fletcher said.

But now, the mechanics work together very well, get things done quickly, and they have a lot of fun in the maintenance bay when they're not working, he said.

"We teach each other a lot," Fletcher said. "It's definitely a lot easier now."

Sgt. Angel Jacquez, who came

from 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, at Camp Lejeune, said working with the Georgians through the training period and the deployment has taught him patience.

Coming from an offensive mindset and moving into an advisory role was a challenge, he said.

"I'm not here to take the fight to the enemy. I'm advising them on how to take the fight to the enemy," Jacquez said.

Despite the initial difficulties, Jacquez said he has enjoyed working with the unit.

"The Georgians are really loyal, very friendly, humble people — really good people to be around," he said. "I have the same relationship with the Georgians that I'd have with my Marines."

Lucas said the Georgian soldiers have a lot of experience and can do many things without any assistance from the Marines.

And that might be the biggest challenge for the Marines: "We're not in charge," he said.

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DODDS SPORTS

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MILITARY

News of medal a shock for vet

By DAVID FISCHER
The Associated Press

MIAMI — Melvin Morris was commanding a strike force on a mission near Chi Lang, South Vietnam, when his Special Forces group came under attack and a fellow commander was killed near an enemy bunker.

Despite massive enemy fire directed at him and his men, hitting him three times, the 72-year-old Morris told The Associated Press on Friday that he was able to get to his fallen comrade and recover the body. He also retrieved a map that included strategic information that would have been trouble if it fell into enemy hands.

More than four decades later, as a way to try to correct potential acts of bias spanning three wars, President Barack Obama will bestow the Medal of Honor on Morris and 23 other veterans. They come after a decadal congressional mandated review of minorities who may have been passed over for the U.S. military's highest honor because of long-held prejudices. Among those posthumously honored is Pfc. Leonard M. Kravitz, the uncle of musician Lenny Kravitz.

Morris became one of the first soldiers to don a "green beret" in 1961 and volunteered twice for deployments to Vietnam during the war.

After his Sept. 17, 1969, ordeal, the then-Staff Sgt. Morris received a Distinguished Service Cross in 1970. He said he never realized that being black might have kept the higher honor from him.

"I never really did worry about decorations," Morris said.

He got a huge surprise when the Army contacted him in May and arranged for Obama to call him at his Cocoa, Fla., home.

"I fell to my knees, I was shocked," Morris said. "President Obama said I was sorry this didn't happen before. He said this should have been done 44 years ago."

"Those that aren't even here to receive their medals, those are my heroes," said Morris, who retired from the Army in 1986 as a sergeant first class. "They gave their whole life. They gave everything. They gave it all."



Morris

Vietnam War

The president will award the Medal of Honor to the following men who distinguished themselves by acts of gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty while serving during the Vietnam War:

■ Specialist Four Santiago J. Erevia will receive the Medal of Honor for his actions while serving as radio telephone operator in Company C, 1st Battalion (Airmobile), 501st Infantry Division (Airmobile) during search and clear mission near Tam Ky, Republic of Vietnam.

■ Staff Sgt. Melvin Morris, for his actions while serving as commander of a strike force drawn from Company D, 5th Special Forces Group (Airmobile), 1st Special Forces, during combat in the vicinity of Chi Lang, Republic of Vietnam on Sept. 17, 1969.

■ Sgt. 1st Class Jose Rodela, for his actions while serving as the company commander, Detachment B-36, Company A, 5th Special Forces Group (Airmobile), 1st Special Forces during combat in Phuoc Long Province, Republic of Vietnam on Sept. 1, 1969.

The president will posthumously award the Medal of Honor to the following men who distinguished themselves while serving during the Vietnam War:

■ Sgt. Candelario Garcia, for his actions while serving as an acting team leader for Company B, 1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry, 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division during combat in Lai Khe, Republic of Vietnam on Dec. 8, 1968.

■ Specialist Four Leonard L. Alvarado, for his actions while serving as a rifleman with Company D, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) during combat in Phuoc Long Province, Republic of Vietnam on Aug. 12, 1969.

■ Staff Sgt. Felix M. Conde-Falcon, for his actions while serving as an acting platoon leader in Company D, 1st Battalion, 505th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division during combat in Ap Tan Hoa, Republic of Vietnam on April 4, 1969.

■ Specialist Four Ardie R. Copas, for his actions while serving as a machine gunner in Company C, 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 5th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division during combat near Ph Romeas Hek, Cambodia on May 12, 1970.

■ Specialist Four Jesus S. Duran, for his actions while serving as an acting M-60 machine gunner in Company E, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) during combat in the Republic of Vietnam on April 10, 1969.



Erevia



Morris



Rodela

Medal of Honor recipients

1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division during combat in Lai Khe, Republic of Vietnam on Dec. 8, 1968.

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Korean War

The president will posthumously award the Medal of Honor to the following men who distinguished themselves while serving during the Korean War:

■ Cpl. Joe R. Baldonado, for his actions while serving as an acting machine gunner in 3rd Squad, 2nd Platoon, Company B, 187th Airborne Infantry Regiment during combat in Kang-dong, Korea on Nov. 25, 1950.

■ Cpl. Victor H. Espinoza, for his actions while serving as an acting Rifleman in Company A, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division during combat in Chonwon, Korea on Aug. 1, 1952.

■ Sgt. Eduardo C. Gomez, for his actions while serving with Company I, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division during combat in Tabu-dong, Korea on Sept. 3, 1950.

■ Pfc. Leonard M. Kravitz, for his actions while serving as an assistant machine gunner with Company M, 5th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division during combat in Yangpyong, Korea on March 6 and 7, 1951.

■ Master Sgt. Juan E. Negron, for his actions while serving as a member of Company L, 65th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division during combat in Kalma-Eri, Korea on April 28, 1951.

■ Master Sgt. Mike C. Pena, for his actions while serving as a member of Company F, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division during combat in Waegwan, Korea on Sept. 4, 1950.

■ Pvt. Demensio Rivera, for his actions while serving as an automatic rifleman with 2nd Platoon, Company G, 7th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division during combat in Changyong-ni, Korea on May 23, 1951.

■ Pvt. Miguel A. Vera, for his actions while serving as an automatic rifleman with Company F, 38th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division in Chorwon, Korea on Sept. 21, 1952.

■ Sgt. Jack Weinstein, for his actions while leading 1st Platoon, Company G, 21st Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division in Kumsong, Korea, on Oct. 19, 1951.



Gomez

1st Cavalry Division during combat in Tabu-dong, Korea on Sept. 3, 1950.

■ Pfc. Leonard M. Kravitz, for his actions while serving as an assistant machine gunner with Company M, 5th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division during combat in Yangpyong, Korea on March 6 and 7, 1951.

■ Master Sgt. Juan E. Negron, for his actions while serving as a member of Company L, 65th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division during combat in Kalma-Eri, Korea on April 28, 1951.

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■ Sgt. Jack Weinstein, for his actions while leading 1st Platoon, Company G, 21st Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division in Kumsong, Korea, on Oct. 19, 1951.

World War II

The president will posthumously award the Medal of Honor to the following men who distinguished themselves while serving during World War II:

■ Pvt. Pedro Cano, for his actions while serving with Com-

pany C, 8th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division during combat in Schevenhutte, Germany, on Dec. 3, 1944.

■ Pvt. Joe Gandara, for his actions while serving with Company D, 2d Battalion, 507th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 17th Airborne Division during combat in Amfreville, France, on June 9, 1944.

■ Pfc. Salvador J. Lara, for his actions while serving as the squad leader of a rifle squad with 2nd Platoon, Company L, 180th Infantry, 45th Infantry Division during combat in Aprilia, Italy, on May 27 and 28, 1944.

■ Sgt. William F. Leonard, for his actions while serving as a squad leader in Company C, 30th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division during combat near St. Die, France, on Nov. 7, 1944.

■ Staff Sgt. Manuel V. Mendoza, for his actions while serving as a platoon sergeant with Company B, 350th Infantry, 88th Infantry Division during combat on Mt. Battaglia, Italy, on Oct. 4, 1944.

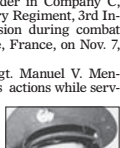
■ Sgt. Alfred B. Nietzel, for his actions while serving as a section leader for Company H, 16th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division during combat in Heister, Germany, on Nov. 18, 1944.

■ First Lt. Donald K. Schwab, for his actions while serving as the commander of Company E, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division during combat near Lure, France, on Sept. 17, 1944.

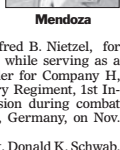
■ First Lt. Donald K. Schwab, for his actions while serving as the commander of Company E, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division during combat near Lure, France, on Sept. 17, 1944.



Cano



Gandara



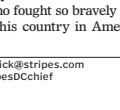
Lara



Leonard



Mendoza



Nietzel

Honor: Heroes from 3 wars to receive long overdue recognition

FROM FRONT PAGE

Such upgrades are not without precedence; in 1998, Army historians completed a review of the records of Asian-Americans or Native American Pacific Islanders who served during World War II. Former Sen. Daniel K. Inouye of Hawaii was among those who had his award upgraded to a

Medal of Honor.

The Medal of Honor is awarded to servicemen who distinguish themselves conspicuously by gallantry above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States; while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing force

or while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party.

"Justice delayed is better than justice denied," said Abraham H. Foxman, National Director of the Anti-Defamation League.

"It is a very welcome effort and show of sensitivity by this administration to seek to redress acts of discrimination, and it is especially laudatory that it relates to our soldiers who fought so bravely on behalf of this country in America's wars."

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MILITARY



Rosa Peralta is surrounded by mementoes of her son, Sgt. Rafael Peralta, at her home in Chula Vista, Calif.

SANDY HUFFAKER/The Washington Post

Heroic tale unraveled

Comrades say Marines' story of sacrifice in Iraq War was untrue

BY ERNESTO LONDONO
The Washington Post

After his death in 2004 in Fallujah, Sgt. Rafael Peralta became perhaps the most lionized Marine of the Iraq War. Shot in the head during an intense firefight, the story went, the infantryman scooped a grenade underneath his body seconds before it exploded, a stunning act of courage that saved the lives of his fellow Marines.

The Navy posthumously awarded Peralta the Navy Cross, the service's second-highest decoration for valor, named a destroyer after him, and made plans to display his battered rifle in the Marine Corps museum in Quantico, Va.

The tale of heroism has become emblematic of Marine valor in wartime. But new accounts from comrades who fought alongside Peralta that day suggest it may not be true. In interviews, two former Marines who were with Peralta in the house when he was shot said the story was concocted spontaneously in the minutes after he was mortally wounded — likely because several of the men in the unit feared they might have been the ones who shot him.

"It has always bugged me," said Davi Allen, a Marine who was wounded in the grenade blast and who said he watched it detonate near, but not underneath, Peralta. After years of sticking to the prevailing narrative, Allen, 30, said he recently decided to tell the truth. "I knew it's not the truth. But who wants to be the one to tell a family: 'Your son was not a hero?'"

Reggie Brown, another Marine



PERALTA FAMILY/The Washington Post

Sgt. Rafael Peralta, shown in this undated photo, died Nov. 15, 2004, in Fallujah, Iraq.

who was with Peralta that day, said that as members of the squad scrambled away from the blast, one of them said that claiming that Peralta had jumped on the grenade would be a good way to honor his legacy.

"I can remember people saying it would be the right thing to do, to say that he did more than he did," Brown, 31, said in an interview, speaking publicly about the case for the first time. "I disagree with everything my fellow Marines proclaim to have seen."

The Navy's yearslong effort to award Peralta the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest decoration for courage on the battlefield, has been stymied by military physicians who have studied the case and determined that the forensic evidence made the grenade-thwarting accounts implausible. That finding has infuriated many Marines over the years.

On Friday night, the Pentagon announced that Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel had turned down a request by Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-

Calif., to reopen a Medal of Honor nomination for Peralta. Hagel, after an extensive review that included new material gathered by Hunter's office, determined that "the totality of the evidence" was insufficient to award a Medal of Honor; the Pentagon said in a statement.

"It's the right thing to do," Hunter, a former Marine who served in Fallujah, said in an interview earlier this month. "When you have young Marines saying, 'I'm not dead, because he jumped on the grenade,' that's all we need to know. There's no reason to complicate this."

Rosa Peralta was frightened to see her elder son ship out in 2004 to Anbar province, the war's deadliest battleground for U.S. troops. As his unit was being readied for the second battle of Fallujah, during which Marines fought pitched street battles clearing insurgents from house to house, the 25-year-old sergeant had a premonition that he would not survive the operation.

He wrote his younger brother a letter telling him that he needed to be ready to be the man of the house. In his last phone call home, he told Rosa to be strong and to take care of his siblings, and he apologized for the grief he had caused her.

On the morning of Nov. 15, eight days into the operation, Peralta's team came under fire after entering a house. The Marines shot back as they scrambled to ascertain where the insurgents were firing from. A handful of the infantrymen saw Peralta drop to the floor. Seconds later, an Iraqi grenade landed near him and exploded.

In the immediate aftermath of

the blast, some of the men in the unit feared they had been the ones who shot Peralta, according to Allen. Tony Gonzales, a corporal who was outside the house, said one of the Marines approached him, put a hand on his shoulder and wept.

"I shot Peralta with a three-burst round to the face," the Marine told him, according to Gonzales. "He ran right in front of my line of fire."

Brown, who said he dashed out of the house when he saw the grenade land on the floor, recalls feeling uncomfortable when he heard Marines in the squad suggest that they embellish the story of Peralta's death. Another Marine who was outside the house and corroborated Brown's account said the story of Peralta jumping on the grenade didn't feel like a coverup at the time.

Allen was the closest person to the grenade other than Peralta and was severely wounded in the backside. As his comrades began treating his wounds, he said he heard Adam Morrison, another Marine in the room, say that Per-

alta had jumped on the grenade.

"That was the first I heard of it," he said. "I had my eyes on the grenade."

Allen said he doesn't think anyone acted maliciously. "Many people thought they had shot him," he said. "That's why the story was created."

In written statements about the firefight collected by the Marine Corps, several Marines described having seen Peralta take the brunt of the blast after pulling the grenade underneath his body. Two Marines who were in the house that day and have described having witnessed Peralta scoop up the grenade said in interviews this week that the account they told then and have repeated over the years is truthful.

Nicholas Jones, the squad leader, called Brown's account "ridiculous." Robert Reynolds said what he witnessed that day is the type of heroism "you only hear about in boot camp. To live it out was unreal."

Reynolds said Peralta saved his life that morning. "He gave me a chance to a second life," he said.

SEE PERALTA ON PAGE 5

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MILITARY



SANDY HUFFERER/The Washington Post

Two Purple Heart medals and other items sit in a display case for Rafael Peralta at his family's home in Chula Vista, Calif.

Peralta: Eyewitness stories, medical findings present conflicting accounts

FROM PAGE 4

Days after the fight, a Marine combat journalist who was with the unit that day penned a gripping firsthand account of the battle, claiming that three insurgents firing Kalashnikov rifles shot Peralta "at point-blank range" in the torso and face.

"In an act living up to the heroes of the Marine Corps' past, ... Peralta — in his last fleeting moments of consciousness — reached out and pulled the grenade into his body," Travis Kaemmerer wrote in an account that remains on a Marine Corps website. Kaemmerer died in a car accident in Virginia in 2006.

The story quickly became national news in the United States and provided a measure of comfort to Rosa Peralta.

"I don't have the slightest doubt that he did that for his comrades," she said in a recent interview. "I know he would have given it all for his friends."

President George W. Bush paid tribute to the Marine's heroism in a radio address broadcast Memorial Day weekend in 2005, saying that "Sergeant Peralta gave his life to save his fellow Marines."

The first packet of evidence the Marine Corps submitted supporting a Medal of Honor had to undergo a second review to attempt to reconcile the eyewitness accounts with the conclusions of forensic doctors. The physicians had concluded that Peralta's gunshot wound would have rendered him unable to respond to the grenade seconds later.

The Navy moved forward with the package after getting alternative opinions from other forensic experts and conducting new interviews with eyewitnesses.

Two of those interviews raised red flags about the veracity of the story, according to documents reviewed by The Washington Post.

Allan said in a Nov. 14, 2005, sworn statement that when he was being treated for his wounds, the then-acting platoon sergeant visited him.

"He told me to 'do what's right,' which I interpreted to mean provide a statement that included Sgt. Peralta jumping on or swooping the grenade under his body or otherwise making his actions more valorous than they actually were," the statement said.

A Marine colonel assigned to investigate the facts wrote in a Nov. 17, 2005, report that he explored those allegations but became convinced that the Marines who testified to Peralta's actions "gave an honest account." He also found that Peralta was "probably" shot by friendly fire and listed both the gunshot and shrapnel wounds from the grenade as the cause of death. The Marine Corps does not count Peralta's death as one of its six friendly fire cases from the Iraq War.

The revised petition was presented to then-Defense Secretary Robert Gates after the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Navy signed off on it. It included dissenting views from medical experts and the undersecretary for personnel and readiness. Gates wrote in his recent memoir, "Duty," that he approved the petition after speaking to officers in Peralta's chain of command and signed the recommendation that would be sent to the White House.

But Gates disclosed in the book that after someone threatened to file a complaint with the Pentagon's inspector general, he appointed a senior panel of independent experts to review the case. In August 2008, the five panel members, who were given access to all of the available records, reached the unanimous conclusion that Peralta could not have deliberately pulled the grenade under his body after he was shot.

In the recent interview, Rosa Peralta said she has come to terms with the possibility that her son may have been shot by a comrade, but she said the evidence that Marine Corps officials have shared with her makes her certain he died heroically.

Having failed to get him the Medal of Honor, the Navy would instead award Peralta the Navy Cross, a worthy recognition of the way he died.

"Without hesitation and with complete disregard for his own personal safety, Sergeant Peralta reached out and pulled the grenade to his body, absorbing the brunt of the blast and shielding fellow Marines only feet away," the citation read.

Rosa Peralta, holding out for the nation's highest honor, never picked it up.



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MILITARY

Wounded warriors put their pain on ice

Hockey team helps vets get beyond injuries

By Lenny Bernstein
The Washington Post

When you deploy to a war zone, Kevin Gatson was saying, your teammates are everything. You work with them, live with them, venture into combat with them, knowing that your life quite literally depends on the guy next to you. You get to know what he'll do in certain situations, where you need to be, what you need to do.

"That team is essentially a lifeline," the 34-year-old Army sergeant said. "You have to watch this guy's back, and he had to watch yours. ... Everyone had to look out for themselves and the person next to them."

A hockey team can be like that, too, he said. It looks like chaos on ice, but when you get to know your teammates, where they'll be and when, you begin to forge that same kind of bond, in pursuit of another kind of victory.

"I know if he moves the puck over here, I need to be over there to get his back. And if I go this way, he's going to do this."

"It's that teamwork you had, only you're doing it on the ice instead of in the fields."

And you're doing it with guys who have only one leg. Or smashed feet. Or worn-out hips.

Gatson plays hockey sitting down, on a special sled that is perched on blades, with other wounded warriors from Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. Gatson still lives there nearly four years after a hidden bomb destroyed his left leg and damaged his right so badly that doctors wanted to amputate it, too.

As practice begins, Gatson sets aside his above-the-knee prosthesis and climb into a sled before heading out onto the ice. He and his teammates on the USA Warriors ice hockey team were in full gear, with shoulder pads, helmets and face masks, but instead of a long hockey stick, each carried two shorter versions, one in each hand. At one end of each stick is a version of the blade you'd recognize if you've ever watched ice hockey. At the other are metal "chutes" that bite into the ice. Players use that and to propel themselves across the ice with surprising speed.

While Gatson and three other members of the sled team practiced at one end of Herbert Wells Ice Rink in College Park, Md., about 16 members of the USA Warriors standing hockey team went through their drills at the other. You couldn't tell under those hockey uniforms, but every member of that team also has



BILL O'LEARY/The Washington Post

Wounded veterans participate in ice hockey practice in College Park, Md. "On the ice, a lot of our injuries go away," said Special Forces veteran Mike Davis.

suffered a service-related injury. The team's two goalies have only two good eyes between them, said Mike Davis, a 53-year-old former Army Special Forces soldier who needed two hip replacements after making more than 200 parachute jumps.

"On the ice, a lot of our injuries go away," said Davis, who served in El Salvador, Lebanon and other parts of the Middle East. "Everybody here gets it," he added. "They know where they came from."

The team has been around for about five years, but it took off about two years ago.

The players travel the Northeast, the sled team battling other sled teams of players with various kinds of disabilities. The standing team competes against both disabled and able-bodied teams. They are funded by donations, money that pays for their equipment and travel. If a wounded warrior moves away but wants to continue playing on the sled team, it will pay to fly him in for

"I know if he moves the puck over here, I need to be over there to get his back. ... It's that teamwork you had (in combat), only you're doing it on the ice instead of the fields."

Kevin Gatson
member, USA Warriors ice hockey team

a game.

Next month, sled hockey will be featured as a sport at the 2014 Paralympic Winter Games in Sochi, Russia.

Gatson was on patrol in the Kandahar region of Afghanistan on July 12, 2010, when he and other troops had to climb a wall in their way. Two teams of soldiers made it over, and Gatson, the first man from the third unit, was just about to clear the barrier when the man ahead of him stepped on a pressure plate and a bomb buried in the wall exploded.

It took Gatson's left leg and left index finger, and his left thumb had to be amputated. His right leg was nearly destroyed as well. For more than a month after he made it back to Walter Reed, he had major or minor surgeries three days a week, rotating from the operating room to the intensive care unit and back again, he said. He doesn't know how many operations he underwent.

"Honestly, I have no idea," he said. "Quite a few. I am definitely no stranger to surgeries." Doctors wanted to amputate his shattered right leg, but he

wouldn't let them. "I kept telling them, 'I'm going to keep my leg,'" he said. Instead, he wore a kind of halo brace, known as an "external fixator." It saved the leg but made sports impossible.

When that came off a couple of years ago, Gatson was introduced to sled hockey by an occupational therapist. "It was actually more of a workout than I had anticipated," the Mississippi native recalled, "and it was actually pretty fun. I felt that I was getting much more of a workout than anything I was doing in physical therapy."

There's also plenty of action, stick-handling and hitting, which Gatson likes. "Basically," he said, "sled hockey is a way that a lot of people who really wouldn't be considered athletes can be athletes."

And there is all that teamwork. When you're wounded, "what you miss the most is the guys," he said. "That team, that team you're on. Everyone has that feeling of being on that team and knows what that's like. And sled hockey brings that back."

MILITARY

1 dead, 2 severely hurt in Fort Bragg training incident

By MARTHA QUILLIN
The (Raleigh, N.C.) News & Observer

FORT BRAGG, N.C. — A training incident that killed one paratrooper from the 82nd Airborne Division and wounded seven others early Friday morning involved a howitzer in a live-fire exercise, according to the Army.

Two of the wounded soldiers were seriously injured, and five suffered minor injuries, said Capt. Douglas Ray, a spokesman for the 82nd. Friday night, one remained at Womack Army Medical Center on post and one was in Duke University Medical Center.

The families of the soldiers have all been notified, but the Army has not released their names or described the nature of their injuries.

It's at least the second live-fire incident in which troops were injured during training at Fort Bragg in three years.

At a press conference, Ray read from a statement and said he could not raise questions because the incident is under investigation by the 82nd, the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command and the Army Readiness/Safety Center.

Ray said the incident occurred during an exercise of the 18th Fires Brigade, an Airborne field artillery unit, that involved an M777 light towed howitzer.

Two medics were on site when the incident happened, Ray said, and provided care to the injured. All eight were taken to Womack, where one soldier was pronounced dead.

In a statement, Col. Stephen G. Smith, commander of the unit, said, "We have suffered a great loss in the 18th Fires Brigade and express our deepest condolences. Those that have been affected by

this tragic incident remain in our thoughts and prayers."

In March 2011, several hundred members of the 2nd Battalion of the 10th Marine Regiment were at Bragg for annual artillery training. A group was firing a similar weapon, an M777A2 lightweight howitzer, when a 155-mm round apparently exploded in the barrel.

Eight Marines and two Navy personnel were injured in that blast. A Marine spokesman at the time said most of the injuries were shrapnel wounds and lacerations. The Marines temporarily halted all live-fire firing following the incident.

The Defense Department did not announce the findings of an investigation into whether the Marines had followed proper procedures, whether there was a problem with the round or if the weapon had malfunctioned.

The Army said it will release updates on Friday's incident "as deemed appropriate." A report on the investigation will be used within the Department of Defense "for accident-prevention purposes only."

Maj. Gen. John W. Nicholson Jr., commanding general of the 82nd, said in the statement: "Our first priority is to provide the families with the support they need during this difficult time."

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US soldier admits taking bribes

The Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — A U.S. soldier based at Fort Knox, Ky., pleaded guilty Wednesday to taking \$57,000 from an Afghan trucking company as part of a scheme to divert loaded fuel trucks from an American military outpost.

Spc. Albert Kelly III, who appeared in U.S. District Court in Louisville, admitted to diverting fuel trucks from Forward Operating Base Salerno near the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and logging in more fuel than was actually delivered in exchange for cash.

Kelly, 28, faces up to 10 years in prison at sentencing in May.

Dressed in U.S. Army fatigues and standing with his hands

clashed behind his back, Kelly gave short answers of "yes, sir" and "no, sir" to questions from U.S. Magistrate Judge James Moyer.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael Bennett told the court that between November 2011 and January 2012, Kelly helped divert 25,000 gallons of fuel. At \$4 a gallon, that diversion cost the United States about \$100,000, which Kelly will repay in restitution as part of his sentence, Bennett said.

Kelly's attorney, Don Meier, said he would seek to have the sentencing hearing delayed to avoid his client receiving a dishonorable discharge if possible. Kelly is due to leave the military in July.



COURTESY OF NASA/AP

A test version of the Orion spacecraft is tethered inside the well deck of the USS San Diego prior to testing by NASA and the Navy.

NASA suspends space capsule recovery test off San Diego coast

The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — A training exercise designed to showcase the government's ability to recover a space capsule at sea was scrubbed after NASA ran into trouble off the Southern California coast, the space agency said Friday.

Crews had difficulty tying down a mock-up of the Orion capsule aboard an amphibious warship off the shores of San Diego.

NASA said cables attached to the capsule weren't strong enough to handle turbulence and snapped off twice while it was in the well deck of the USS San Diego before it could be moved out to sea on Thursday.

With the Orion mock-up still on the Navy ship, teams could not

practice fetching the spacecraft from the ocean.

"Even though the testing didn't go as we had planned, we're learning lessons that will help us be better prepared to retrieve Orion," Bill Hill, of NASA headquarters, said in a statement.

Engineers were troubleshooting the problem, and it was not clear when the test would be rescheduled.

NASA has been developing a next-generation spacecraft to carry astronauts beyond low-Earth orbit, possibly to an asteroid or Mars. Orion, which will make its first unmanned test flight this fall, is being designed to travel to deep space and return at speeds of 25,000 mph by splashing down

into the Pacific.

The water landing is a throwback to the 1960s and 1970s, when Navy ships routinely tracked and recovered Mercury, Gemini and Apollo spacecraft after re-entering Earth's atmosphere.

With the space shuttle fleet retired, NASA has decided to go with an ocean splashdown. Unlike in the past, when helicopters would hoist astronauts after a mission, the new plan calls for an amphibious transport ship to dispatch divers and small boat teams to recover Orion and its crew.

Last year, NASA and the Navy practiced recovering the Orion in the calm waters of the Elizabeth River in Virginia with no problem.



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MILITARY

Nuke test scores fell flat during alleged cheating

By ROBERT BURNS
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Last summer, when dozens of nuclear missile officers are suspected to have cheated on exams, test scores were among the lowest of the year, according to Air Force records obtained by The Associated Press. That is the opposite of what might be expected if answers were being shared as widely as officials allege.

Were they inept cheaters?

There is, in fact, no sharing of answers during that period?

Were test questions so difficult that even the cheating by some failed to produce higher-than-usual scores for the group as a whole?

The Air Force isn't saying. It notes that tests are not identical each month, and thus score "variances can be expected."

The facts of the tainted testing are still under investigation by the Air Force Office of Special Investigations. It ranks as the worst such scandal in the history of the intercontinental ballistic missile force and is among a series of security lapses and slip-ups that have plagued the ICBM corps during the past year. The missteps prompted Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel to launch two probes of the entire nuclear force to find root causes for leadership lapses and other problems — steps Hagel deemed necessary to restore public confidence.

Hagel said he thinks the nuclear force remains secure and reliable but said "something is wrong."

The suspected cheating has been described as a symptom of mismanagement by commanders

who have given too much weight to monthly test scores in determining which launch officers get promoted. More broadly, it reflects a degree of turmoil inside a force responsible for 450 nuclear-tipped Minuteman 3 missiles that stand launch-ready in underground silos in Montana, North Dakota, Wyoming, Colorado and Nebraska.

The suspected cheating was uncovered in January during an Air Force investigation of illegal drug use. Two officers questioned by that probe happened to be members of the 341st Missile Wing at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana, and at least one stands accused of having transmitted test answers to colleagues via text message.

The exam in question, known as a T4, is given monthly and is meant to test knowledge of classified procedures for targeting and launching the Minuteman 3s, the nation's only land-based nuclear missile. During the course of a year, the tests cover different segments of a long list of launch tasks.

In addition to these and other written proficiency tests, missile launch officers undergo classroom instruction and routine training on launch simulators; most do 24-hour shifts "on alert" in underground launch control centers about eight times per month with a team of two officers responsible for 10 missiles.

The Air Force has focused its investigation on Malmstrom, where officials say the cheating took place during late summer. Notably, in the months after the cheating allegedly ended, scores at Malmstrom improved dramatically.



RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ/Courtesy of the U.S. Army

PC. MATTHEW BECERRA OF THE 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 2ND STRYKER BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM, 1-21 INFANTRY, INSPECTS STRYKER ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS THEIR ROTATION THROUGH THE NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER IN 2010.

Fixing Strykers falls to soldiers as Army ends repair contract

By ADAM ASHTON
The (Tacoma, Wash.) News Tribune

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Jason Allen got a tongue-in-cheek warning from fellow Army mechanics when he told them he wanted to work on Stryker infantry vehicles at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.

"It's not heaven like it used to be," his friends told him before he joined the unit last year. "You'll have to do the work."

Since the inception of the Army's Stryker brigades more than a decade ago, private manufacturer General Dynamics was contracted to keep the machines running instead of handing the work to enlisted soldiers, as the military does with other ground vehicles.

Now, General Dynamics' roughly \$300 million-per-year maintenance contract is coming to an end as the Army seeks to contain its spending.

That means more work for the enlisted mechanics in Lewis-McChord's Stryker brigades.

"I wouldn't have it any other way," Allen said he told his peers when they teased him about joining a Stryker brigade at the base south of Tacoma.

It's a big change at Lewis-McChord, which in 2001 became the first Army installation to host Strykers.

Thirteen years later, Lewis-McChord is still the only Army post with multiple Stryker brigades. Each has more than 300 Strykers and 4,500 soldiers. Lewis-McChord has three of the brigades, though one is deactivating and sending its gear to Fort Carson in Colorado.

The initial placement of Strykers at Lewis-McChord kicked off a series of heavy investments in the program in the region.

General Dynamics has a maintenance hub at the base where the company used to do intense resets of Strykers as they returned from war. These days, the local hub has a smaller portfolio because General Dynamics sends major Stryker overhauls to a plant in Alabama.

The Defense Department also bought a warehouse in Auburn that General Dynamics used to manage a supply chain of Stryker parts. It came under scrutiny by the Defense Department Inspector General last year when auditors determined it contained about \$900 million worth of outdated, unusable parts.

Army logistics experts now are expected to exercise more control of that supply chain. It's a complicated network because Strykers come in 10 basic varieties, from infantry carriers that can haul as many as nine soldiers to ones equipped with cannons that can destroy tanks.

The Defense Department Inspector General in 2012 and 2013 issued three critical reports on the Army's last, \$1.5 billion Stryker maintenance contract with General Dynamics. Collectively, they urged the Army to start maintaining Strykers with uniformed soldiers in the same way it keeps up its tanks, helicopters and other machines.

Lockheed F-35 for Marines faces year's delay in stress testing



Provided by Lockheed Martin Corporation

By TONY CAPACIO
Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — On-the-ground stress testing for the Marine Corps version of Lockheed Martin Corp's F-35 jet may be halted for as long as a year after cracks were found in the aircraft's bulkheads, Pentagon officials said.

Testing of the fighter's durability was stopped in late September after inspections turned up cracks in three of six bulkheads on a plane used for ground testing, said Joe DellaVedova, spokesman for the F-35 program office.

The previously undisclosed suspension of the stress testing may increase scrutiny of the Marine Corps' F-35B, the most complex of the three versions of the plane, during congressional hearings on the Defense Department's fiscal 2015 budget. The department plans to request funds for 34 F-35s, eight fewer than the 42 originally

planned, according to officials. Six of those planes would be for the Marines.

"We consider this significant but by no means catastrophic," Frank Kendall, the Pentagon's undersecretary for acquisition, said in an emailed statement. While the program office is still performing an assessment, "based on preliminary analysis, a redesign" of some F-35B structures will be required, said Kendall, who has a master's degree in aerospace engineering.

Michael Gilmore, chief of the Defense Department's weapons testing office, said in his annual report last month that during ground testing in late September "the cracks continued to grow" until a "bulkhead severed and transferred loads, which caused cracking in the adjacent" bulkhead.

Redesigning the bulkheads could cause the Marines' F-35 to regain some of the weight saved by using aluminum bulk-

heads instead of the titanium ones in the Air Force and Navy models. That move was part of an effort in 2004 and 2005 to lighten the increasingly heavy Marine Corps version.

The test office said in its annual report that the Marine Corps model gained 37 pounds last year. Changes to the bulkhead risk adding more weight to a plane that's now within 20 pounds of the 32,577-pound maximum specified in the contract for it.

"Managing weight growth with such small margins will continue to be a significant program challenge," Gilmore wrote in his report.

The cracking "is significant enough to warrant changes to the design" of the bulkhead, Jennifer Elzea, spokeswoman for the Pentagon test office, said in an email. "This is a new defect that must now be addressed through a production change and a retrofit plan."

NATION

Medicare Advantage plans may face cuts

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Cuts are on the table next year for Medicare Advantage plans, the Obama administration says. The politically dicey move affecting a private insurance alternative highly popular with seniors immediately touched off an election-year fight.

The announcement gave new ammunition to Republican critics of President Barack Obama's health care law, while disappointing some Democratic senators who had called on the administration to hold rates steady. Insurers are still hoping to whittle back the cuts or to dodge them altogether.

Late Friday after financial markets closed, Medicare issued a 148-page assessment of cost factors for the private plans next year. It included multiple vari-

ables, some moving in different directions, but analyst Matthew Eyles of Avalere Health estimated it would translate to a cut of 1.9 percent for 2015, a figure also cited by congressional staffers briefed on the proposal.

"There's nothing to like here if you're one of the plans," said Eyles.

Administration officials say the plans don't need to be paid as much to turn a profit, because the growth of health care spending has slowed dramatically. They see the cuts as a dividend for taxpayers.

But the political clout of the plans is growing as seniors flock to them seeking better health care value. Medicare Advantage plans now serve nearly 16 million people, or about 30 percent of Medicare beneficiaries. They

can offer lower out-of-pocket costs and broader benefits than traditional Medicare, but often restrict choice.

Insurers say they will be forced to pass on higher costs to seniors or to cut benefits if their rates are reduced, and some plans may drop out altogether. The impact could vary significantly around the country.

The industry says the cuts come as Medicare Advantage reductions programmed under the health care law are ramping up. The law sought to compensate for prior years in which the plans were overpaid. But it also includes a new tax on insurers, so industry officials fear the combined impact will be much higher.

The largest insurer trade group, America's Health Insurance Plans, is sparing no effort to head

off cuts, with an extensive advertising and lobbying campaign.

It has won the support of 40 senators from both parties who, in a Feb. 14 letter, called on the administration to essentially hold Medicare Advantage rates steady. Among the signers were six Democratic senators in contested races whose outcome will determine whether Obama faces a Congress next year that's completely controlled by Republicans.

Final rates won't be released until April 7, so the lobbying will get even more intense. In prior years, Medicare has sometimes pulled back from proposed cuts.

Friday's announcement will help the government decide basic rates for the Medicare Advantage plans. But the actual change individual plans and customers eventually see will vary, depending on

factors like a plan's quality rating or where the plan is located.

The plans have become a key source of revenue growth for insurers who sell and administer the subsidized coverage. They offer basic Medicare coverage topped with extras like vision or dental coverage or premiums lower than standard Medicare rates. There are hundreds of different plans around the country, each with its own set of variables like different deductibles, premiums and co-insurance.

UnitedHealth Group Inc. and Humana Inc. are the two largest Medicare Advantage providers. Health insurance stocks that soared in 2013 slipped at the start of this year after Humana Inc., the second-largest in the market, said rate cuts could be deeper than expected.



CHARLES DHARAPAP/AP

Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama greets audience members as he arrives Thursday to speak at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington.

Ignoring protest from China, Obama hosts Dalai Lama

By JOSH LEDERMAN
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama granted an audience to Tibet's Dalai Lama over the strong objections from China that the U.S. was meddling in its affairs. The White House took pains to ensure the meeting was not portrayed as a conference of two heads of state.

Obama played host Friday to his fellow Nobel laureate in the White House's Map Room rather than the Oval Office, where the president traditionally brings dignitaries for photos. Beijing decries the Dalai Lama as an anti-Chinese separatist because of his quest for greater Tibetan autonomy. The White House calls him a respected cultural and religious figure who is committed to

peace.

Despite media requests, the meeting was closed to journalists, and in a departure from previous visits, the Buddhist monk left the White House without speaking to reporters.

Beijing had protested the meeting after the White House announced it Thursday night. A statement from China's Foreign Ministry issued Friday night reiterated its view that no country has a right to interfere in its internal affairs and said the U.S. had "gravely violated basic norms governing the international relations and seriously harmed the Sino-U.S. relations."

In another sign of its displeasure, China summoned Daniel Kritenbrink, the charge d'affaires for the U.S. Embassy in Beijing,

the State Department said. The U.S. had no immediate comment on the development.

Beijing frequently protests meetings with the Dalai Lama, and the dust-ups have become something of a diplomatic ritual for Obama, who faced Beijing's ire when he met with the Tibetan leader in 2010 and again in 2011. In his first year in office, Obama put off a meeting with the monk in what was seen as a move to placate China.

How much does it matter?

"I have severe doubts that the Chinese would proceed to do anything in response or retaliation that would undermine much larger Chinese interests" with the U.S., said Jonathan Pollack, a China scholar at the private Brookings Institution.

Postal supervisors limiting carrier hours, but explanations vary

By JOSH HICKS
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Some U.S. Postal Service managers are telling mail carriers to stop their routes at designated times regardless of whether their deliveries are completed, according to the head of the association of postal supervisors.

The move has prompted complaints from the public, including residents in Bethesda, Md., for example, some of whom say they've been without mail for a week.

Bethesda's Marcela Zoccali said she went seven days without mail after a snowstorm hit Feb. 13. She said the streets and walkways in her neighborhood were cleared by Saturday, but no mail arrived at her home until Wednesday, when a carrier explained that he was ordered to return to his station every day by 5 p.m.

"With this kind of service, no wonder so many people are switching to other mail carriers," Zoccali said.

National Association of Postal Supervisors President Louis Atkins confirmed Thursday that postal managers are trying to keep carriers off the streets at night to avoid potential violence. He said he knows of stations in Miami, Seattle and the District of Columbia that have taken that step.

"Bringing [the carriers] in before dark is something we can control that has a significant effect on violence at night," Atkins said. "You can't stop it all, but you can do your part."

Nighttime violence against on-duty workers has become a growing concern for the Postal Service. In November, Washington-area postal worker Tyson Barnett

was fatally shot while working a new route in Prince George's County, Md., that often kept him out until 7 p.m.

Washington-area TV station WJLA, which first reported the postal delays Wednesday, said that concerns about overtime were the cause for the delays.

But Postal Service spokeswoman Sue Brennan denied Thursday that the agency has implemented a new policy. Employees were instructed last week to be off the streets by 6 p.m. because of severe weather, she said.

"This was a unique event," Brennan said. "As a rule, it is not Postal Service policy, nationally or in Washington, D.C., that carriers are to return to the office at 6 p.m., regardless of whether or not their routes have been completed."

Brennan said that the Postal Service has begun taking steps to minimize the percentage of carriers out past 6 p.m., such as adjusting routes and start times, reviewing employee performance and reevaluating staffing levels.

Atkins said that the Postal Service could ensure that carriers finish their deliveries before nighttime by requiring them to start work earlier and by hiring more personnel.

Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton, D-D.C., and four Democrats from the House of Representatives delegation sent a letter to Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe calling for a plan to protect workers from violence while avoiding delays.

"Surely the Postal Service is capable of delivering the mail before dark and on time, as it has for decades, without endangering its workers," Norton said in a statement Friday. "We need to see specific remedies immediately."

NATION

In-flight cellphone use hotly debated

By JOAN LOWY
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — When it comes to deciding whether airline passengers can use their cellphones in flight, federal agencies are sending different signals to consumers.

The Transportation Department, which regulates aviation consumer issues, indicated in a notice posted online Friday that it is considering retaining the 23-year-old ban on the calls and asked for public comment.

Two months ago, the Federal Communications Commission voted to pursue allowing the calls. The FCC has responsibility for determining whether the use of cellphones in flight would interfere with cellular networks on the ground.

Polls show that many passengers, particularly frequent fliers, oppose allowing in-flight calls from passengers' cellphones. Echoing their concerns, the Transportation Department said it believes allowing passengers to make cellphone calls "may be unhelpful or disruptive to others."

"People tend to talk louder on cellphones than when they're having face-to-face conversations," the department said. "They are also likely to talk more and further increase the noise on a flight, as passengers would not be simply talking to the persons sitting next to them but can call whomever they like."

Some planes already have seat-back phones, but they are rarely used, the department said, adding that the concern "is not about individual calls but rather the cumulative impact of allowing in-flight calls in close quarters."

At the FCC, Chairman Tom Wheeler has said he wants to repeal the ban on cellphone use in flight, calling it restrictive and outdated. He also wants the airlines, not the government, to have final say on in-flight calling. He declined to comment Friday on the Transportation Department's notice.

In an Associated Press-GFK poll three months ago, 48 percent of those surveyed opposed letting cellphones be used for voice calls while planes are in flight, while 19 percent were in favor and 30 percent were neutral. Among those who'd flown four or more times in the previous year, the rate of opposition soared to 78 percent.

Delta Air Lines told the government last year that 64 percent of its passengers indicated that the ability to make phone calls in flight would have a negative impact on their onboard experience.

The FCC has already received more than 1,200 public comments on its proposal, almost all of them opposed to lifting the ban.

"Nobody, absolutely nobody wants to be the involuntary audience of another passenger's telephone conversation," one commenter said Friday. "It is the equivalent of torture to be forced to listen to the incessant prattling of a seatmate compounded by the impossibility of escape."



AL DIAZ, MIAMI HERALD/MCT

Pamela Rauseo performs CPR on her nephew, Sebastian de la Cruz, 5 months, after pulling her SUV over on the side of the road Thursday afternoon in Miami to try to save the unconscious infant.

Miami baby saved by roadside CPR effort in stable condition

By SUE COCKING
The Miami Herald

MIAMI — A day after a photographer's lens happen to catch a frantic roadside effort by motorists to save an unconscious infant, the baby's aunt and doctor announced Friday that he was stable.

While still in a critical care unit at Jackson Memorial Hospital, Sebastian de la Cruz, 5 months, managed to share a smile with nurses and doctors.

But on Thursday, little Sebastian, who was born prematurely, was fighting a respiratory infection and crying as his aunt was headed west on the Dolphin Expressway. When he abruptly stopped crying, Pamela Rauseo, 37, of Miami, knew something was wrong.

She stopped her SUV on the expressway just east of 57th Avenue and immediately jumped out screaming that her nephew had stopped breathing.

The baby was turning blue. Traffic soon backed up.

The dramatic scene unfolded before Miami Herald photographer Al Diaz, who also was stuck in traffic. Diaz ran through stalled traffic, shouting to get help. He quickly got the attention of Sweetwater police officer Amauris Bastidas, who rushed to help perform CPR.

Then Diaz grabbed his camera, snap-

ping off a series of pictures, capturing the heroic efforts of Bastidas and others to save little Sebastian.

On Friday morning, news outlets throughout the U.S. and from as far away as Australia, Germany and Brazil covered the story after Diaz's moving photos of Rauseo and other motorists performing CPR on Sebastian hit the Internet.

Dr. Juan Solano said Friday that the baby is in stable condition in Jackson's Holtz Pediatric Critical Care unit and is "under very close observation" with no timetable for when he might go home.

"We do think he had been having respiratory issues, which were made worse by a respiratory infection he had recently," he said.

Solano and Dr. Judy Schaechter, interim chief of pediatrics at the University of Miami's Miller School of Medicine, said they want to use the intense media focus on the incident to encourage everyone to become certified in CPR.

"Cases like Sebastian's happen every day," Solano said. "It is fortunate it happened with a good result, so you can spread the message that CPR training is important and Sebastian was saved by CPR."

The course can be taken in 30 minutes online, followed by another 15- to 30-minute in-person session with the Red Cross or American Heart Association, Solano said.

Court rules against school over health care mandate

The Associated Press

CHICAGO — A federal appeals court on Friday ruled against the University of Notre Dame in a case over parts of the federal health care law that forces it to provide health insurance for students and employees that covers contraceptives.

The U.S. 7th Circuit Court of Appeals in Chicago upheld a federal judge's earlier ruling that denied the Roman Catholic school's request for a preliminary injunction that would prevent it from having to comply with the birth control requirement as the university's lawsuit moves forward.

The lawsuit challenges a compromise in the Affordable Health Care Act offered by the Obama administration that attempted to create a buffer for religiously affiliated hospitals, universities and social service groups that oppose birth control. The law requires insurers or the health plan's outside administrator to pay for birth control coverage and creates a way to reimburse them.

Notre Dame, located in South Bend, Ind., contends the law violates its freedom to practice religion without government interference. In its 2-1 decision, the court noted that Notre Dame had already notified the administrator of its employee plan, Meritain Health Inc., and the insurer for students, Aetna Inc., that the university would not pay for contraception as required under the compromise. However, Aetna and Meritain still must cover contraception.

"We imagine that what the university wants is an order forbidding Aetna and Meritain to provide any contraceptive coverage to Notre Dame staff or students pending final judgment in the district court," Judge Richard A. Posner wrote. "But we can't issue such an order; neither Aetna nor Meritain is a defendant (the university's failure to join them as defendants puzzles us), so unless and until they are joined as defendants they can't be ordered by the district court or by this court to do anything."

In his dissent, Judge Joel M. Flaum noted: "Notre Dame tells us that Catholic doctrine prohibits the actions that the government requires it to take. So long as that belief is sincerely held, I believe we should defer to Notre Dame's understanding." Flaum wrote.

In a statement provided to the South Bend Tribune, Notre Dame spokesman Paul Brown said the university's "concern remains that if government is allowed to entangle a religious institution of higher education like Notre Dame in one area contrary to conscience, it's given license to do so in others."

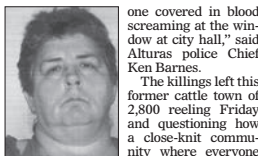
Small town rocked by deadly shooting at tribal meeting

From wire reports

ALTURAS, Calif. — The afternoon at City Hall was winding to a close on Thursday when a woman splattered with blood began ringing the bell and screaming for help.

She had come around the corner from a tribal Indian meeting where police say a woman shot and killed four people, three of them her relatives. The suspect, Cherie Lash Rhoades, previously had been chairwoman of the small Northern Paiute tribe, but the meeting was being held to evict her and her son from the rancheria.

"It's not every day that you see some-



Rhoades

one covered in blood screaming at the window at city hall," said Alturas police Chief Ken Barnes.

The killings left this former cattle town of 2,800 reeling Friday and questioning how a close-knit community where everyone knows most everyone had failed to see any signs of the coming disaster.

The dead included Rhoades' brother and current tribal Chairman Rurik Davis, 50;

her niece, Angel Penn, 19; and nephew, Glenn Calanico, 30. Lynn Russo, 47, the tribal administrator, also was killed.

The small rancheria "pretty much lost their leadership yesterday," said Alturas Mayor John Dederick, a retired cabinet-maker who lives two blocks from the shooting site. "We've seen this happen in other communities, in other small towns," Dederick said. "I don't think anyone anticipated something like this here."

A Bureau of Indian Affairs official said there were about 18 adults at the meeting and some children. The blood-covered woman who escaped was the office worker whom police have declined to identify.

NATION

Police: No sign of injury on body in snowed-over vehicle

By MARYCLAIRE DALE
The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA—Countless pedestrians near Philadelphia's main train station walked by a snow-covered sedan with dark windows and a slew of parking tickets before police this week found the body of a young mother inside.

Nadia Malik, 22, of Marple Township in southeastern Pennsylvania, had been missing for 11 days when her body was found lying face-down in the front seat Thursday, under a pile of clothes and a gym bag.

The gray 2007 Nissan Altima had been parked near a train station, although it had been towed there Feb. 14 by workers clearing a main artery after a snowstorm.

"Everybody says, 'Why didn't somebody see her,'" said Marple Township Police Chief Thomas Murray.

"She was kind of covered up pretty good in the car. Unless you were really peering into the car, you wouldn't know she was there. The car had very deep-tinted windows," Murray said. "So now the investigation goes from one

of 'Where is she?' to 'What happened to her?'"

Philadelphia Police Lt. John Walker said an autopsy Friday showed "no visible sign of injury." He said officials are awaiting toxicology reports.

Malik had a volatile relationship with her boyfriend, Bhupinder Singh, who is suspected of fleeing to his parents' home near Cleveland, after visiting a relative in New York City.

The couple had two preschoolers, one of whom lives in Pennsylvania and the other with his family in Ohio, Murray said. They also had a baby who died of unknown causes in 2012. Delaware County detectives never closed the investigation into the death, and are revisiting it given Malik's demise.

"I don't know what the circumstances were, but a child is not supposed to die that young," Murray said.

Malik made calls to her brother and a friend on or about Feb. 9 to say Singh was holding her against her will, police said. They filed a missing persons report, and police later asked for the public's help with the case. News articles that followed led to a tip about the car's location.

Singh, 25, was arrested at his parents' home in Solon, Ohio, on a parole violation, after trying to flee out the back of the residence, Murray said. Singh had traveled to Ohio by bus, after first going to New York City, police said.



Malik

Ex-hospital owner to say he bribed senator

By LINDA DEUTSCH
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES—The former owner of a tiny orthopedic hospital with an unusually heavy roster of spinal surgery patients was charged Friday with health care fraud in a \$500 million scheme to defraud workers' compensation insurance providers with the help of a California state senator.

The state insurance commissioner called the 16-year scheme one of the largest workers' comp fraud cases in the history of California's Department of Insurance.

Michael D. Drobot, 69, a central figure in the scandal that ensnared state Sen. Ronald S. Calderon and his brother, agreed to plead guilty and to testify in return for a reduced sentence. Calderon is charged with accepting bribes and luxury perks from Drobot to influence legislation that would allow him to continue the scam.

U.S. Attorney Andre Biotte Jr. released a plea agreement with Drobot in which the former hospital owner outlines his payments to Calderon as well as doctors, chiropractors and other medical

professionals who referred patients to his Long Beach hospital. There were no allegations of medical problems with the surgeries. The charges focused on illegal kickbacks given to those who referred patients.

"In some cases, the patients lived dozens or hundreds of miles from Pacific Hospital, and closer to other qualified medical facilities," the court documents said. The patients were not told that their medical professionals were getting kickbacks for sending them to Drobot's facility.

Drobot had a bribery payment scale for specific surgeries, the documents said. He would pay a kickback of \$15,000 per lumbar fusion surgery and \$10,000 per cervical fusion surgery.

Prosecutors, who dubbed their investigation "Operation Spinal Cap," used an undercover FBI agent in their probe.

Drobot's attorneys, Janet I. Levine and Jeffrey Rutherford, said he accepts responsibility for his actions and "is providing information to assist the government in its expanding investigations."



CRAIG RUTTLE/AP

New York Mayor Bill de Blasio delivers the budget address Feb. 14 at City Hall in New York.

NYC mayor faces flap over SUV speeding video

By JONATHAN LEMIRE
AND TOM HAYS
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Mayor Bill de Blasio faced more questions Friday about why his official vehicles were videotaped breaking traffic laws only two days after he rolled out a sweeping traffic safety plan.

The mayor was in the front passenger seat of the lead SUV of a two-vehicle caravan on Thursday that was captured on video speeding, running through a pair of stop signs and not signaling when changing lanes. The footage, which aired on WCBS-TV, was taken as de Blasio returned to City Hall after a news conference in Queens.

De Blasio deferred to the New York Police Department when met by reporters Friday morning

on his way to the gym. The mayor's cars are typically driven by members of his security detail, made up of NYPD detectives.

"The NYPD provides security protocol for the drivers. Talk to them about that," he said.

After his weekly meeting with the mayor on Friday, Police Commissioner William Bratton downplayed the video, saying that the drivers have special training to make decisions based on security needs and won't face any questioning.

"I'm not overly concerned by what I saw," Bratton said.

Asked if the mayor can tell his drivers to slow down, the commissioner responded, "He could raise it, but the security concerns would override any of his concerns."

De Blasio cited Bratton's comments later Friday, saying, "Commissioner Bratton addressed the

topic of my security detail earlier today. I am very comfortable with what Commissioner Bratton said and I refer you to his comments."

Despite having said earlier that he would address the apparent speeding, De Blasio refused to answer reporters' shouted questions about the matter.

The video emerged two days after de Blasio released the "Vision Zero" plan, which aims to eliminate all traffic fatalities. The plan proposed reducing the citywide speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph, installing more red light and speed enforcement cameras, detailing more NYPD officers to enforce speeding violations and toughening penalties for speeding.

"We're very serious about 'Vision Zero,' de Blasio said. "We're going to keep moving forward with it."

Wis. gov. responds to release of emails

By JIM MYERS
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

WASHINGTON — Speaking to reporters Friday for the first time since the release of thousands of previously sealed documents, Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker declined to say whether he knew of or personally used a secret email system in his office when he was Milwaukee County executive.

"The only comment I am going to say about all of this, on all of this, because I am not going through 27,000 pages of stuff, is that a Democratic district attorney looked at all that information and interviews ... and ultimately issued charges against the people that they did and concluded that

legal process as of March last year," Walker said.

"They didn't find any other action to bring that forward and so that's the end of it. So I am not going to go back and relive all these things."

Walker was in Washington to attend the winter meeting of the National Governors Association.

Documents released Wednesday linked Walker to a secret email system that was used in his county office. Staffers used the



Walker

system to avoid public scrutiny and disclosure. The documents also showed close ties between his campaign operation and taxpayer-paid staff during the months leading to the November 2010 election.

Democrats have pounced on the trove of documents.

Asked whether efforts by the Democratic National Committee will weigh him down as he faces re-election and a potential presidential run in 2016, Walker said, "No, because again, unlike other issues that have come up lately, this is something that's past. They are digging up stuff from the past about a legal process that actually ended last March."

AMERICAN ROUNDUP



LARRY STEAGALL, KITSAP SUN (BREMERTON, WASH.)/AP

Enjoying an eagle-eye view

A bald eagle rests on perch with a view of the Olympic Mountains in the background in Port Orchard, Wash., on Thursday.

Report: Firefighters failed to help man

DC WASHINGTON — An internal investigation shows five District of Columbia firefighters were aware that a man had collapsed and needed medical attention across the street from a fire station, but none of them went to help.

The report was issued Friday by the city's deputy mayor for public safety. It said one firefighter already is facing internal charges, and charges are pending against three others.

Medric Cecil Mills, 77, went into cardiac arrest in a shopping center parking lot across from a fire station on Jan. 25. The longtime city employee later died at a hospital.

After wet spell, state's 2nd sinkhole opens up

OR PORTLAND — After a wet spell unusual even for Portland, Ore., a second homeowner has found a sinkhole in the yard. But this one didn't swallow anybody.

Firefighters on Wednesday put up yellow tape around a 20-foot-deep hole at the southeast Portland home of Justin Nguyen.

The discovery came a day after a faculty member at Oregon Health and Science University and her puppy were trapped for 45 minutes in a hole that city workers determined was a century-old cesspool that collapsed.

Firefighters rescued the woman and dog unharmed.

Virtual currency Bitcoin ATM arrives at rail hub

MA BOSTON — A Bitcoin ATM has landed at a Boston rail hub, allowing commuters to learn about the digital currency.

On Wednesday, the ATM was placed by Liberty Teller at Boston's bustling South Station,

THE CENSUS

9 The number of years since a North Carolina woman rented the movie "Monster-in-Law" from Dalton Videos in Pickens, N.C. Kayla Michelle Finley, 27, was arrested recently and charged with failing to return the video cassette that she rented in 2005. The owner took out a warrant against Finley, and she was arrested when she was at the sheriff's office for something else and the warrant was found. Finley spent the night in jail before she was released. The owner of the now-closed video store decided Friday to drop the charges.



50

The number of marathons ran by a Knoxville, Tenn., woman — one in every state. Last month, Jill Blewett completed her goal when she finished the Maui Oceanfront Marathon in Hawaii, while she was five-and-a-half months pregnant. Blewett's ambition to complete a marathon in every state took shape in 2008. After having completed marathons in California, Virginia, Maryland, West Virginia, South Carolina and North Carolina, Blewett, 30, decided to knock off all 50. "I really like traveling and seeing new cities," Blewett said. "I feel like running a marathon in a new city is the best way to travel."



which sees thousands of commuters a day. It and an ATM in Albuquerque, N.M., are believed to be the first in the country.

Co-founder Chris Yim said the money can be stored in a virtual wallet and used at online retailers in place of cash or credit cards.

Atheist group objects to police chaplains

WI LA CROSSE — A group of atheists wants Wisconsin police departments to stop using chaplains.

The La Crosse Tribune reported that the Freedom from Religion Foundation has sent a letter to the La Crosse police department, arguing that the chaplains are an endorsement of religion and violate the constitutional separation of church and state.

Police chaplains in La Crosse are volunteers who respond to emergencies with officers to support victims and families. The chaplains also listen in confidence to officers struggling with work or personal issues.

City commissioners repeal psychics ban

SD DEADWOOD — Deadwood city commissioners have repealed an ordinance banning fortune tellers, psychics and mystics from operating in the

western South Dakota gambling town.

The ban had been in place for more than two decades. The local Chamber of Commerce lobbied to have it repealed, saying it would be an opportunity to expand the town's offerings beyond gambling.

Opponents said fortune tellers and psychics don't present a family friendly environment. Mayor Chuck Turberville told the Rapid City Journal on Thursday that only one person — a local pastor — spoke against repealing the ban during Tuesday's commission meeting.

Bag of pot found in pants donated to charity

PA SUGARCREEK — Charity may begin at home, but in this instance it may end badly at a northwestern Pennsylvania Salvation Army outlet.

That's where Sugarcreek Borough police said they were called after workers found a large plastic bag of marijuana among some donated clothes.

Police Chief Matt Carlson told the Derrick of Oil City that he suspects the owner of the drugs has noticed them missing by now, only because the bag contained a "substantial quantity" of pot.

The chief says this isn't the first time officers have investigated an unusual item among donated clothing saying, "we've

had guns ... cash ... rings, and now marijuana."

University: Constitution classes unnecessary

SC COLUMBIA — University of South Carolina President Harris Pastides is asking lawmakers to help tweak requirements that university students spend one year learning about the U.S. Constitution, the Declaration of Independence and the Federalist Papers.

The requirement has become an issue in the race for student body president. Two state lawmakers wrote Pastides last week to ask his position.

Pastides said 60 percent of university students take at least one class that deals with the historical documents. He said requiring a year of lessons would stall graduation for students and force them to pay more in tuition and costs.

Clemson and the College of Charleston don't require the courses, while Winthrop and Coastal Carolina require three credit hours.

High school coach resigns after arrest

CT ENFIELD — A high school boys' basketball coach in Enfield has resigned after being arrested in an alleged prostitution sting.

John Norris, 53, was the coach of the Fermi High School junior varsity boys' basketball team. He was one of 11 men charged with soliciting prostitution on Valentine's Day by Windsor Locks police in an undercover sting dubbed "Operation Cupid."

Norris said he wasn't asked to resign as coach, but he stepped down because he didn't want to be a distraction or a bad example for the team.

8 wrestlers out of meet after lynching photo

NJ TRENTON — Eight New Jersey high school wrestlers scratched from a state tournament days after a photo surfaced of team members apparently simulating a lynching were intended to show school spirit, their attorney said.

In a prepared statement, Scott Wilhelm said the Phillipsburg High School students didn't think what they were doing could be seen as insensitive and they were sorry for offending anyone.

The photo features seven of the wrestlers apparently simulating a lynching of a black wrestling dummy in a rival team's shirt.

The statement noted that the wrestling dummy in the photo is used in daily practices and, as far as they know, is only manufactured in dark leather.

From wire reports

WORLD

The opposition takes Kiev

Ukraine parliament votes to hold new elections; president refuses to step down

BY MARIA DANILOVA
AND YURAS KARMANAU
The Associated Press

KIEV, Ukraine — Protesters took control of Ukraine's capital Saturday, seizing the president's office as parliament voted to remove him and hold new elections. President Viktor Yanukovich described the events as a coup and insisted he would not step down. After a tumultuous week that left scores dead and Ukraine's political destiny in flux, fears mounted that the country could split in two — a Europe-leaning west and a Russian-leaning east and south.

Parliament arranged the release of Yanukovich's chivral, former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, who was on her way to Kiev to join the protesters.

Asked by crowds gathered at the hospital where she was released about her further plans, Tymoshenko said, "I will run for president," news agencies reported.

She said she will "make it so that no drop of blood that was spilled will be forgotten."

Yanukovich said he would not recognize any of the lawmakers' decisions as valid. He left Kiev for his support base in the country's Russian-speaking east, where lawmakers questioned the legitimacy of the newly empowered legislature and called for volunteer militias to uphold order.

'A dictator has been overthrown. We stood for our right to live in a different Ukraine. It's a victory.'

Anatoly Sumchinsky
Ukraine protester

I'm the legitimately elected president," Yanukovich said in a televised statement, clearly shaken and with long pauses in his speaking.

"Everything that is happening today is to a greater degree vandalism and banditry and a coup d'état," he said. "I will do everything to protect my country from breakup, to stop bloodshed."

Ukraine, a nation of 46 million, has huge strategic importance to Russia, Europe and the United States.

The country's western regions, angered by corruption in Yanukovich's government, want to be closer to the European Union and have rejected Yanukovich's authority in many cities. Eastern Ukraine, which accounts for the bulk of the nation's economic output, favors closer ties with Russia and has largely supported the president.

The three-month protest movement was prompted by the president's decision to abort an agreement with the EU in favor of a deal with Moscow.

"A dictator has been overthrown," said protester Anatoly Sumchinsky, among thousands gathered on Kiev's Independence Square cheering a huge screen broadcasting a parliamentary debate. "We stood for our right to live in a different Ukraine. It's a victory."

Tymoshenko, the blond-braided icon of Ukraine's 2004 Orange Revolution, was heading from prison in the eastern city of Kharkiv straight to the protest camp, her party said. She served 2½ years on a conviction of abuse of office that domestic and Western critics have denounced as a political vendetta. Tymoshenko's reappearance



AP photos

Left: Protesters walk below a poster of Yulia Tymoshenko in central Kiev, Ukraine, on Saturday. Right: Anti-government protesters stand guard in front of the Ukrainian parliament.

How Ukraine's economic decay fueled protests

BY DAVID MCHUGH
The Associated Press

The battle in Kiev is, in large part, a fight for the country's economic future — for better jobs and prosperity.

Ukraine's protesters want to pry their country away from Russian influence and move closer to the European Union. A look at neighboring Poland, which did just that, suggests why.

The two countries emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Union two decades ago in roughly similar economic shape. But Poland joined the EU and focused on reforms and investment — and by one measure is now three times richer than Ukraine.

Ukraine, on the other hand, sank in a post-Soviet swamp of corruption, bad government and short-sighted reliance on cheap gas from Russia.

Per capita economic output is only about \$7,300, even adjusted for the lower cost of living there, compared to \$22,200 in Poland and around \$51,700 in the United States. Ukraine ranks 137th world-

wide, behind El Salvador, Namibia and Guyana.

It didn't have to be this way, experts say. Ukraine has a large potential consumer market, with 46 million people, an educated workforce and a rich potential export market next door in the EU. It has a significant industrial base and good natural resources — in particular, rich farmland.

Among the problems, Ukraine did little to move away from Soviet-era industries producing commodities such as steel, metals and chemicals. Former communist state companies, often privatized to politically connected figures, relied on cheap gas from Russia and growing demand from the world economy for their raw materials.

That helped Ukraine's economy grow rapidly from 2000 to 2008, but reduced pressure to modernize.

When the world economy fell into a crisis in 2008, demand for Ukraine's raw materials plunged. Then in 2009, Russia significantly raised the price of its gas supplies, further pulling the rug from un-

derneath the country's export industries. Also, Ukraine's state gas company, Naftogaz, charges customers only about 20 percent of what it pays for imported Russian gas. That means the government spends about 7.5 percent of the entire economy's output each year on a massive home heating subsidy aimed at keeping voters happy. That results in large budget deficits that the government must borrow to cover.

In addition, a recent World Bank study of the economy cited "pervasive" corruption as a major factor holding back the economy.

At street level, businesses are subjected to arbitrary treatment by officials and demands for bribes. Higher up, there is widespread public skepticism over the fortunes amassed by the connected, known as oligarchs.

In particular, attention has focused on the career of Yanukovich's son, Oleksandr, a dentist who, according to Forbes Ukraine, has amassed a \$510 million fortune through various business enterprises.

on the political scene could shake things up even more.

Saturday's developments were the result of a European-brokered peace deal between the president and the opposition.

But Yanukovich said Saturday that he would not sign any of the measures passed by parliament over the past two days as a result of that deal. They include motions:

■ Saying the president removed himself from power.

■ Setting new elections for May 25 instead of next year.

■ Trimming the president's powers.

■ Naming a new interior minister after firing the old one on Friday.

■ Releasing Tymoshenko.

The decisions were passed with large majorities, including yes votes from some members of Yanukovich's Party of Regions, which dominated Ukraine's political scene until this week but is now swiftly losing support.

Kiev's defense and military officials called for Ukrainians to stay peaceful. In statements Saturday, both the Defense Min-

istry and the chief of the armed forces said they will not be drawn into any conflict and will side with the people.

But they did not specify whether they still support the president or are with the opposition.

The president was in Kharkiv, where governors, provincial officials and legislators gathered alongside top Russian lawmakers and issued a statement saying that the events in Kiev have led to the "paralysis of the central government and destabilization of the situation in the country."

WORLD

Benedict joins Francis at ceremony

By NICOLE WINFIELD
The Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — Retired Pope Benedict XVI joined Pope Francis at a ceremony Saturday creating the cardinals who will elect their successor in an unprecedented blending of papacies past, present and future.

Benedict discreetly entered St. Peter's Basilica from a side entrance surrounded by a small entourage and was greeted with applause and tears from the stunned people in the pews. He smiled, waved and seemed genuinely happy to be there, taking his seat in the front row, off to the side, alongside the red-draped cardinals.

It was the first time Benedict and Francis have appeared together at a public liturgical ceremony since Benedict retired a year ago and became the first pope to step down in more than 600 years.

The significance of his presence was multifold, signaling both continuity and even a sign of Benedict's approval of the 19 men Francis had chosen to join the College of Cardinals, the elite group of churchmen whose primary job is to elect a pope.

Francis' choices largely reflected his view that the church must minister to the peripheries and not be a closed institution of rules but rather a place of welcome and mercy. He named cardinals from some of the world's poorest countries — Haiti, Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast among them — tapping many pastors like him.

In a sign that Benedict still commands the honor and respect owed a pope, each of the 19 new cardinals — after receiving his red hat from Francis at the altar — went directly to Benedict's seat



COURTESY OF L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO/AP

Pope Francis, left, welcomes Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI during a consistory inside the St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on Saturday.

to greet him before then exchanging a sign of peace with the other cardinals.

Over the summer, Francis and Benedict appeared together in the Vatican gardens to unveil a statue, but Saturday's event marked one of the most important liturgical ceremonies a pope can preside

over: the formal installation of new cardinals.

Saturday's ceremony was thus the latest step in the evolving reality of having two popes living side by side inside the Vatican: Benedict's presence marked a new phase of reintegrating him back into the public life of the

church after a period of being hidden away that began almost exactly a year ago with his Feb. 28 resignation.

With Saturday's precedent, chances grew that Benedict would also appear at the April 27 canonization of his predecessor, John Paul II, and Pope John XXIII.

After processing down the central aisle at the start of the service, Francis went directly to Benedict, clasped him by his shoulders and they embraced. Francis greeted him in the same way at the end of the service, and Benedict removed his white skullcap in a sign of respect as Francis approached.

The crowd erupted in polite applause when one of the new cardinals, Secretary of State Pietro Parolin, greeted Benedict in his introductory remarks at the start of the service, saying, "We are grateful for your presence here among us."

Benedict, dressed in his white cassock with a long, double-breasted overcoat, again smiled and waved.

Some people reached out to try to touch Benedict as he passed by; others tried to approach him to take his photo but were restrained by ushers.

The occasion for this historic first was Francis' first cardinal-making ceremony to formally welcome 19 new "princes of the church" into the College of Cardinals.

He tapped like-minded cardinals from some of the world's poorest, most remote and impoverished nations: Two hail from Africa, two from Asia and six from Francis' native Latin America, which is home to nearly half the world's Catholics but is grossly underrepresented in the church's hierarchy.

On Saturday, President Nouri al-Maliki announced a three-day halt of military operations in Fallujah as a "goodwill" gesture.

In a statement read on state television, al-Maliki said the halt began Friday and will last through Monday after requests from clerics and tribal sheiks to halt the bloodletting.

Al-Maliki's statement did not say whether military operations would resume after the halt. Government officials could not be immediately reached for comment.

Renzi becomes Italy's youngest premier

ROME — Matteo Renzi was sworn in as Italy's youngest prime minister ever Saturday after he cobbled together a government he says will change the face of the country's politics and economy.

Renzi, 39, the leader of the center-left Democratic Party, unveiled his government Friday and said the broad coalition will bring hope to the economically stagnant country.

After formally accepting the mandate to form the government, Renzi said he will waste no time in enacting reform.

Renzi had been serving as Florence mayor when he engineered a power grab last week to effectively force fellow Democrat Enrico Letta to step down after 10 months at the helm of a fragile, often squabbling coalition.

Anti-Muslim violence condemned by Taliban

KABUL — The Afghan Taliban is calling for an end to violence against Muslims in the Central African Republic in a rare statement on conflicts outside their region.

Central African Republic has been wracked by sectarian violence, with Christian armed fighters hunting down and killing Muslim civilians in recent weeks despite the presence of thousands of peacekeepers.

The violence has displaced tens of thousands of Muslims in what the United Nations human rights body has called "ethnic-religious cleansing."

In a statement released Saturday, the Taliban condemned the "senseless killing" of Muslims at the hands of "bloodthirsty militias" as the world sits "idly by."

It warned the situation threatens the peaceful coexistence of Muslims and Christians throughout Africa and urged the international community — including the pope — to stop the bloodshed.

Pakistani helicopters kill 9 militants

PESHAWAR, Pakistan — Pakistani helicopter gunships targeted a militant training facility in the country's northwest on Saturday, killing nine insurgents in the latest of a series of attacks and peace negotiations, according to police and security officials.

The strikes came as a spokesman for the Pakistani Taliban rejected a government demand that the militant movement halt attacks, saying the government should be first to announce a cease-fire.

Underscoring the militants' refusal to stop attacks, a roadside bomb hit a vehicle carrying a pro-government elder in the northwestern town of Buner, killing him and two of his guards, police official Javed Khan said.

The military launched Saturday morning's strikes after confirming reports about the presence of militants at a compound in the village of Thal in the Hangu district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, two security officials and a local police officer said.

From The Associated Press

Militants attack Iraq army patrol as unrest rages on

By SINAN SALAHEDDIN
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Officials in Iraq say militants attacked an army patrol in the country's east on Saturday, killing at least nine troops. The attack followed earlier car bombings that killed five people.

Two bombs targeted a four-vehicle patrol in the town of al-Saadiyah, 90 miles northeast of Baghdad, a police officer said. Militants opened fire on the

troops after the bombing in an attack that killed nine and wounded four, he said.

The attack came hours after three car bombs exploded in the city of Tikrit, some 80 miles north of Baghdad, another police officer said. The officer said the blasts near the homes of local security and civilian officials killed five people and wounded 18.

Two medical officials confirmed the figures. All officials spoke on condition of anonymity

as they were not authorized to release information to journalists.

Fierce clashes pitting government security forces and allied Sunni tribal militias against a coalition of insurgents also have been raging in western Iraq's Anbar province since late December.

An al-Qaida offshoot and other insurgent groups have taken control of the city of Fallujah and parts of the provincial capital, Ramadi. Thousands have fled the violence.

Sharma fell in love and got married in October, police said. Willinger, 35, of West Chester, Pa., adopted an Indian name, Kiran Sharma, and began working with a local nongovernmental organization to promote tourism in Agra. Sharma, 32, was a rickshaw cab driver in Agra city.

But police say they separated soon after because of differences.

American-Indian love story ends in death near Taj Mahal

The Associated Press

LUCKNOW, India — An Indian man fatally stabbed his American wife before killing himself near the Taj Mahal four months after the couple married near the legendary monument of love, police said Sunday.

Erin W. Willinger's body was found with multiple stab wounds

late Thursday night in a deserted part of the city, said Agra police Chief Shalabh Mathur. Her husband, Bunty Sharma, committed suicide by igniting cooking gas and causing a massive explosion in his home, Mathur said.

Willinger and Sharma met last year when she visited the Taj Mahal with friends. She and

"Both of them tried to resolve their differences and even met with a marriage counselor," Mathur said.

On Thursday night, Sharma took Willinger out in his vehicle and on reaching a secluded place, stabbed and killed her and dumped the body on the side of the road, Mathur said.

LIFESTYLE



Taking rhymes to the street

Rap lyric signs are a hot find for street art enthusiasts

By MATT STEVENS
Los Angeles Times

Tony Castillo skateboarded down Fairfax Avenue as he had for more than two years, but on one December morning he noticed something new.

Clasped to the streetlight pole in front of the sneaker store Flight Club, a bright red sign with white text stared him in the face. Though it had the look of a standard street sign, it offered no instructions on parking, driving or walking. Instead it displayed a rap lyric that made reference to the very spot Castillo had just blown past.

Bun B the OG like '95 Air Max / Neon green outta Flight Club off Fairfax

Hours later, the 25-year-old from the Venice, Calif., area found himself sweeping in front of his store next door and gravitating toward the sign again. He set his fingers to work twisting off the nuts and pushing hard on the braces to pop out the bolts. After about "a cigarette and a half," Castillo held one of his most treasured pieces of street art.

"I can see the energy the artist put into it," he said. "This is some really thoughtful stuff."

Artist Jason Shelowitz (also known as Jay Shells) installed 45 of the 46 signs he had designed for Los Angeles County in December, but since then he believes all have disappeared.



PHOTOS BY CAROLYN COLE, LOS ANGELES TIMES/MCT
Artist Jason Shelowitz (aka Jay Shells) brought his "Rap Quotes" project from New York to Los Angeles in December.

The Times searched for 19 and found only fragments of one. A spokesman for the city of Los Angeles Bureau of Street Services said it is illegal to post signs on public property without a permit, but the department has no record of removing any of the signs.

Some signs have been taken by street-art enthusiasts like Castillo, and at least one quoted artist took his sign for himself. Rappers including Murs, Action Bronson and Lupe Fiasco have given big ups to the project via social media, sometimes posting pictures of their sign on Instagram, Facebook or Twitter.

Shelowitz said he plans to return to Los Angeles later this month to put up six new signs. Gallery 1988 on Melrose Avenue plans to exhibit limited edition signs and photos of signs starting in April.

"I was thinking (the signs) would be a hidden gift for people who pay attention to their surroundings," Shelowitz said. "I wanted it to be something where if you happened to see it, you'd be like, 'That's... awesome!' — and just take a minute."

Growing up in the suburbs of New York, he was surrounded by music; he and his friends drove into the city to see live hip-hop and as he got older, some became DJs and producers.

Years later, in his home studio on the Upper East Side, Big L's track "Lifestylez Ov Da Poor & Dangerous" started playing one day. The song warns against late-night trips to a park at the corner of West 139th Street and Lenox Avenue in New York. Shelowitz contemplated the lyric, and the seed for the project took root.

"I think I just realized at that moment — I had never been there," he said. And when he arrived, "I just thought it would be so cool to mark that corner with the lyric."

Soon he was sending mass emails and solicitations on social media asking for any rap lyric that mentioned a very specific location. After the suggestions rolled in, he put up more than 50 signs in New York, and months later, he carried 46 signs to Los Angeles during a holiday visit.

Shelowitz took to Twitter in December to send out pictures of each sign's location, weeks after he put them up.

By then, the scavenger hunt had already begun, and most of the signs were gone.

"I GREW UP IN THE PROJECTS CALLED HOWARD, AND IF YOU RAN FROM A FIGHT YOU WAS A COWARD AND GOT DEVoured"
— Master Ace

"A HUSTLER HAS TO MACK IN FRESH GEAR, MY CHOICE OF ROLLS ROYCE AND A DUPLEX LOCATION UP AT SUNSET & LA BREA"
— Sir Meech

"AMATEUR NIGHT SHOWTIME AT THE APOLLO, PROBABLY BE WATCHING BILL COSBY TOMORROW"
— Rakim

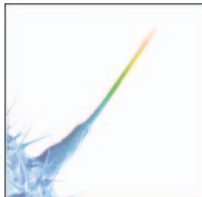
Top: Tony Castillo stands at the entrance of Fight Club in Los Angeles in January, holding a rap quote sign by Shelowitz.

FRANCINE ORR, LOS ANGELES TIMES/MCT

Shelowitz has been posting the red and white signs around Los Angeles and New York, and they have gotten so popular, all are quickly stolen.

MUSIC

RECENT RELEASES



Peter Dinklage

And I'll Scratch Yours (Real World)

In 2010, Peter Dinklage released an album of covers called "Scratch My Back," featuring his take on songs by Arcade Fire, Bon Iver, Lou Reed and others, and intended to follow it with an album of these artists covering his songs. It took nearly four years to gather what he needed to keep his promise, but much of "And I'll Scratch Yours" is certainly worth the wait.

Paul Simon's version of "Biko" is more tender than Dinklage's original, lamenting the death of anti-apartheid activist Stephen Biko with acoustic guitars and sweet string sections. Where Dinklage is defiant, Simon is more fragile and emotional. Reed turns the wistful "Solsbury Hill" into a stomping, snarling piece, filled with guitar roar.

Although some of the inventions don't quite match the originals, most of "And I'll Scratch Yours" keeps Dinklage's experimental spirit.

— Glenn Gamboa
Newsday



A Great Big World

Is There Anybody Out There? (Epic)

Considering how unexpected A Great Big World's breakthrough success with the wrenching ballad "Say Something" has been, it seems only fitting that the duo's debut, "Is There Anybody Out There?," is filled with even more surprises.

Ian Axel and Chad Vaccarino, who teamed up when they were both at NYU, shot to the top of the pop charts after they memorably performed "Say Something" with Christina Aguilera on "The Voice," the raw breakup song becoming even more poignant as a duet between Axel and Aguilera.

However, those looking to place A Great Big World into a small, acoustic balladeer box will be shocked by how eclectic "Is There Anybody Out There?" is musically and lyrically.

How this all fits together is probably a mystery to everyone but the band, but they approach it with such passion and joyfulness that you end up going along for the wild ride and enjoying it.

— Glenn Gamboa
Newsday



Bill Callahan

Have Fun With God (Drag City)

A companion to last year's acclaimed "Dream River," Bill Callahan's "Have Fun With God" is a remix record that reimagines the eight tracks as though channeled through Kingston, Jamaica. This is Bill Callahan in dub: bass-heavy, echoed examinations of "Dream River" songs that have been stripped of some of their structure to create something else altogether.

The practice was common in 1970s reggae, when artists such as Burning Spear and Peter Tosh offered both studio recordings and "versions" of the same song. The most influential producers, most notably King Tubby and Lee "Scratch" Perry, helped give birth to remix culture.

As a stand-alone entity, "Have Fun ..." is a mesmerizing, and utterly strange, listen. Though hardly essential for anyone but hardcore fans, it's a solid stab at the subgenre. Now if only he'd follow this with a Houston-style "chop and screw" rap album.

— Randall Roberts
Los Angeles Times



Against Me!

Transgender Dysphoria Blues (Total Treble)

Everything and nothing has changed on the new Against Me! album. The band still traffics in full-throttle and full-throated punk rock, deploying buzz-saw guitars and shout-along choruses for overt sociopolitical purposes. But on "Transgender Dysphoria Blues," the quartet has a new rhythm section and, in some ways, a new leader: the former Tom Gabel is now Laura Jane Grace, and most songs address her transformation in explicit, often profane language.

The vocals are still a gravelly bark, especially on the terrific title track. Grace and fellow guitarist James Bowman share anthemic riffs inspired by the Clash, Billy Bragg, and NOFX, but there's more of the Thermals and Gaslight Anthem here. The guitars have more gloss than grit, while the lyrics are unvarnished (and often unprintable). This fascinating, brief album flags a bit in its second half, but it's provocative throughout.

— Steve Kington
The Philadelphia Inquirer



Bottle Rockets

Bottle Rockets/The Brooklyn Side (Bloodshot)

Falling between Lynyrd Skynyrd and Merle Haggard is not a formula for popular success. But that too-rock-for-country, too-country-for-rock approach is part of the charm of the Bottle Rockets, who at their best tell sharp-witted stories of working-class life without a trace of condescension or irony.

The Missouri band was at its best on its first two albums, from 1993 and 1995, back in print on this two-disc set. The debut established singer-guitarist Brian Henneman, a former roadie for Uncle Tupelo, as a refreshingly unaffected songwriting voice. Is there a more plaintively devastating song than "Kerosene"? With "The Brooklyn Side," the Bottle Rockets delivered on the promise of its predecessor, as grabbers like "Welfare Music" and "1,000 Dollar Car" high-lighted a masterpiece. Each disc comes with numerous bonus tracks, including demos, outtakes and covers.

— Nick Cristiano
The Philadelphia Inquirer



Young the Giant

Mind Over Matter (Fueled by Ramen)

Young the Giant surprised the rock world with its smashes "Cough Syrup" and "My Body" in 2010, unusual anthems that connected with huge audiences. When it came time to follow up the successful debut, though, the California band froze for a bit. "Mind Over Matter" is their post-writer's-block effort, and it feels oddly unsure and confined. There's clearly some worry they're trying to shake off, especially in the single "It's About Time," where they discuss paralysis and lurch into Incubus territory. Oddly, they are actually at their poppiest on the dance-beat-driven "Paralysis," showing they learned how to make their disaster fears work for them.

— Glenn Gamboa
Newsday



Hurray for the Riff Raff

Small Town Heroes (ATO)

Roots-music lovers have a new heroine to discover in Alynda Lee Segarra. This Bronx-born folk singer of Puerto Rican descent ran away from home to ride the rails at 17 and wound up in New Orleans. Her collective, Hurray for the Riff Raff, has in Segarra a commanding frontwoman who never oversteps and writes songs of startling intelligence and empathy that reinvent the tried-and-true without ever seeming to try too hard. "The Body Electric," a song with a title inspired by Walt Whitman that's a feminist corrective to the romanticized misogyny of murder ballads, is the one that'll get lots of attention. But this Americana coming-out party is rock-solid from first to finish.

— Dan DeLuca
The Philadelphia Inquirer



Little Mix

Salute (Syco/Columbia)

Little Mix arrived in the U.S. last year with surprising force, scoring the highest chart debut for a British girl group's first album. (Sorry, Spice Girls.) Might success have come too soon for these alums of the U.K. "X Factor"? Where the women put across an up-for-anything spirit on their debut album, "DNA," here they sag under the weight of too many wind-swept piano ballads and booming productions seemingly modeled on Katy Perry's "Roar."

Flashes of the playful old Little Mix appear in the dubstep-laced "Move" and "Nothing Feels Like You." More typical of "Salute" is the dreary "These Four Walls," about "the feeling that the end has come." What a buzz kill.

— Mikael Wood
Los Angeles Times



Neil Finn

Dizzy Heights (Lester)

Neil Finn has written effortless pop songs since the '70s, in Split Enz and, especially, in Crowded House. He also has a penchant for working with family: brother Tim in Split Enz and the Finn Brothers; wife Sharon in the Pajama Club; and, on "Dizzy Heights," sons Liam (a successful singer-songwriter in his own right) and Elroy as well as his wife. "Dizzy Heights" steps away from the perfectly crafted guitar pop that has usually been Finn's specialty. At times, it's more abstract and experimental. Elsewhere, Finn tries his hand at blue-eyed soul. The latter works better than the former, but Finn sounds like he's working to stretch outside of what he does best.

— Steve Kington
The Philadelphia Inquirer



Stephen Malkmus & The Jicks

Wig Out at Jagbags (Matador)

"Wig Out at Jagbags" is the first Jicks album since Stephen Malkmus reunited with his old Pavement buddies for a tour, and its emphasis on wit, wordplay and concision could be residual effects of revisiting his classic indie-rock songs from the '90s. The funny "Lariat" and catchy "The Janitor Revealed" possess Pavement's breezy charm, and the album is dense with great Malkmus quips. With its inside-baseball jokes (including the easy-listening, ironically groovy "J Smoov"), and its jabs at, among other things, hipster nostalgia for the Pavement era and Foxgryen, "Wig Out at Jagbags" is Malkmus at his ironic, comic best.

— Steve Kington
The Philadelphia Inquirer

MUSIC



Singer-songwriter Robert Ellis shows his extensive range and offers something for everyone on his new album, "The Lights from the Chemical Plant."

Courtesy of New West Records

Robert Ellis

The Lights from the Chemical Plant (New West)

Had things been different, Robert Ellis might be leading country music's long-predicted return to its roots. Alas, Ellis finds that role unappealing and has mostly turned his back on his classic country sound with a new album of singer-songwriter-influenced material, "The Lights from the Chemical Plant."

This album leans more on the influences of storytellers Paul Simon and Randy Newman than the Texas troubadours who have shown through on his last two albums. This allows Ellis to show off his profound songwriting skills in a different, no less appealing way. He's whimsical on "TV Song,"

poignant on "Chemical Plant," nails the melancholy barroom piano ballad "Bottle of Wine" and unfurls the racing sails on "Only Lies."

He even throws in a well-wrought cover of Simon's "Still Crazy After All These Years" for good measure.

All great moments, but the best come when Ellis leans

back toward his own roots. When the 25-year-old opens his mouth, we still hear the twang of southeastern Texas. And when he arranged his songs with veteran producer Jacques King, he usually pushed Will Van Horn's often towering pedal steel guitar to the front of the mix.

He addresses this directly on the album's most moving track, "Houston," a song written as he packed his things for Nashville, Tenn., during a recent move. "Oh, Houston, this is not goodbye/you will be living inside my heart ..." He finishes that song with a towering guitar solo, then shows you what he can really do on six string with the album's best cut, the honky-tonk hell-and-brimstone burner "Sing Along."

In the end, Ellis offers a little bit of something for everyone — not a claim many can make.

—Chris Talbot
The Associated Press



Courtesy of Nasty Little Man

Daughters of visionary jazz musician Charlie Haden, the Haden Triplets, from left: Rachel, Petra and Tanya, recently released their self-titled debut album.

The Haden Triplets

The Haden Triplets (Third Man Records)

What possible street cred could there be in a roots-country record sung by three New York-born, Los Angeles-reared sisters and produced by a guy who grew up in Santa Monica, Calif.? Plenty, when the singers are Petra, Tanya and Rachel Haden, the triplet daughters of jazz luminary Charlie Haden, and that producer happens to be Ry Cooder.

It's worth knowing that before the triplets' dad earned his stripes in the jazz world, Charlie spent many years performing country music with his family throughout the Midwest — a history he tapped in his 2008 album, "Rambling Boy," for which Tanya and Rachel were along for the musical ride.

So, no big surprise that his offspring ab-

sorbed a fondness for songs they tackle here such as the Carter Family's "Single Girl, Married Girl," the 1955 Kitty Wells hit "Making Believe" and the Louvin Brothers' existentially heartbreaking "When I Stop Dreaming." They're not utterly rooted in old-timey selections, however: They also take on Nick Lowe's sweet "Raining or Raining."

Cooder's production is fittingly raw, putting no phony gloss on songs brimming with heart-on-sleeve honesty. Petra Haden has created a cottage industry with multitracked recordings showcasing the versatility of her own voice, but in tandem with her sisters, the vocal lines bring to bear the power of family harmony that's long been an important foundation of traditional country music. The Haden Triplets carry on that tradition masterfully.

—Randy Lewis
Los Angeles Times

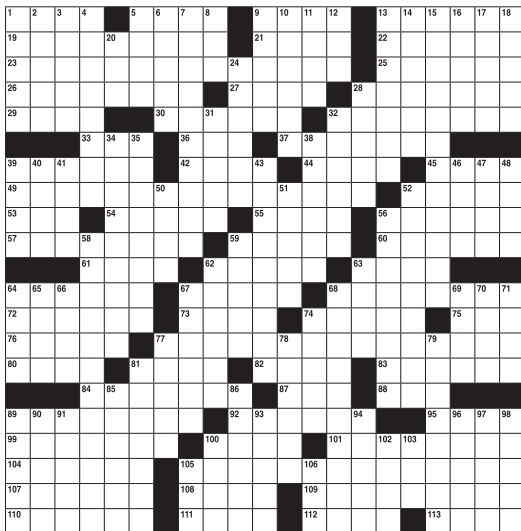


CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

PASSING GRADES By YAAKOV BENDAVID / Edited by Will Shortz

- ACROSS
- 1 Summer refreshers
- 5 Israel's Netanyahu, informally
- 9 Bowler and sailor
- 13 Tracking systems
- 19 Ports
- 21 Memphis deity
- 22 Actress Cuthbert of "24"
- 23 One who turned Cinderella's pumpkin into pumpkin cheesecake?
- 25 Drive away
- 26 Reference
- 27 New York's Jacob — Park
- 28 Crude coconut opener
- 29 Cherry part
- 30 Worth mentioning
- 32 Iglu and yoghurt, e.g.
- 33 Bad beginning?
- 36 — cycle
- 37 Dustin Hoffman title role
- 39 County or lake of Cooperstown, N.Y.
- 42 Dunking cookie
- 44 Be too syrupy
- 45 Liquor unit
- 49 Snorkeling bargain?
- 52 Hip-hop artist with the 2013 #1 album "Born Sinner"
- 53 Up to, shortly
- 54 French noodles?
- 55 What makes blue jeans blue
- 56 "She's got electric boots, a suit" ("Bernie and the Jets" lyric)
- 57 Rust-causing agents
- 59 Vex
- 60 Stomachs
- 61 Fit to —
- 62 Tin can plinker, maybe
- 63 Challenge for a speech coach
- 64 Oscar winner Leachman
- 67 Setting of "The Crucible"
- 68 Nappy fabric
- 72 Undeveloped
- 73 Elizabeth Taylor role of '63
- 74 Roman ruler before Caesar
- 75 Subj. of Snowden leaks
- 76 Dismantle on a ship
- 77 Transportation company that skimps on safety?
- 80 Conk
- 81 Wisecrack
- 82 Of the flock
- 83 Lawn care brand
- 84 Mythological monster
- 87 Addr. book datum
- 88 Even if, in brief
- 89 Corkscrewed
- 92 — "back" no turning
- 95 Dress accessory
- 99 Knacks
- 100 Reason for an ophthalmologist's visit
- 101 It might be answered, "Muy bien, gracias" (lyric)
- 104 Sergeant's order
- 105 Stephen Hawking's computer-generated voice?
- 107 Church vessel
- 108 Bring in
- 109 Duvel pub offering
- 110 Prepares to propose
- 111 Kind of rug
- 112 Buttonhole, for example
- 113 NASA's Research Center
- DOWN
- 1 Acting family
- 2 Did a Vegas job
- 3 Return option
- 4 Pulled strings, maybe?
- 5 Former '69" N.B.A.'er Hayes, to fans
- 6 "What did deserve this?"
- 7 Comfortable state
- 8 Suffix with age
- 9 Band's cue
- 10 More wan
- 11 Draws
- 12 Old ads initials
- 13 Force under Stalin
- 14 Keys on a piano
- 15 Two things seen beside James Bond at a casino?
- 16 Popular ski spot
- 17 Butler of literature
- 18 Register ring-ups
- 20 Screenwriting guru Field
- 24 Call from a balcony
- 28 Massenet opera
- 31 Indoor balls
- 32 In a loathsome way
- 34 Stranding trouble
- 35 Tying site
- 38 Director's cry
- 39 "The Simpsons" character with a habit of calling things "gnarly"
- 40 Candy bar that comes two to a pack
- 41 Most aries
- 43 Insect repellent ingredient
- 46 Artery
- 47 "That's —" in
- 48 Bodies of eau
- 50 Little: Suffix
- 51 Per —
- 52 Use for a résumé
- 56 Spammer enabler
- 58 "Oh, yeah? Let's see you hold your breath for two minutes!" e.g.?
- 59 Better qualified



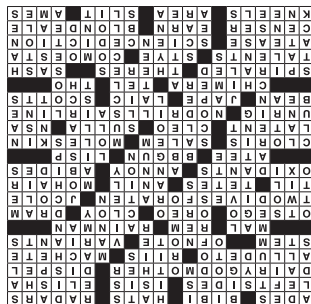
- 62 Like Bruce Willis, in his later movie roles
- 63 She "drank champagne and danced all night," in song
- 64 Crude weapon
- 65 46-Down division
- 66 Spanish alternative?
- 67 Checked (out)
- 68 Myocyte
- 69 Sweater, e.g.
- 70 " — it rich?" (Sondheim lyric)
- 71 Highlands refusals
- 74 Better at conviving
- 77 Handles
- 78 Triangular sail
- 79 Infuser contents
- 81 Altar no-shows
- 85 Gingerbread house visitor
- 86 Enrobe
- 89 Heap
- 90 Eucharist holder
- 91 TV actress Graff
- 93 Spotted scavenger
- 94 "Ditto"
- 96 "Take me —"
- 97 Lifted
- 98 Hosiery brand
- 100 Kind of tissue
- 102 Coin grade
- 103 Repetitive behavior condition, for short
- 105 View from a boardwalk
- 106 Grammy Awards airer

GUNSTON STREET



"Gunston Street" is drawn by Basil Zaviski. E-mail him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and visit gunstonstreet.com.

RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE



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BOOKS

A tale of family, grief and faith

Missing woman, troubled soldier haunt Oates' latest novel, 'Carthage'

BY AMANDA ST. AMAND
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

When a book begins by telling readers that a young woman, 19, has vanished into the deep woods, the expected outcome is rarely happy.

But in Joyce Carol Oates' newest book, "Carthage," perhaps the outcome is not quite so bleak. For the first half of the book, readers make their own assumptions about what has happened to Cressida Mayfield, the younger of Zeno Mayfield's two daughters, and whether she indeed met a gruesome fate at the hands of her sister's former fiancé.

Oates' book delves into a far more layered portrayal than merely a young woman's fate — the relationship between Cressida and her family and why the engagement of her sister,

Juliet, and a soldier, Brett, fell apart. Even when he comes home injured, including disfiguring facial scars, Juliet stands by him.

"On the Fourth of July, Juliet had returned home early — and alone — (the most gorgeous, gaudy fireworks had just begun exploding in the sky above Palisade Park) to inform her family that the engagement had ended. Her cheeks were tear-streaked. Her face had lost its luminosity and looked almost plain."

Although Juliet mourns the loss, it's not something she discusses with Cressida. In the Mayfield family, Juliet is the pretty one and Cressida is the smart (and somewhat strange) one. Their mother, Arlette, clearly prefers Juliet, while Zeno harbors a soft spot for Cressida.

So when Cressida disappears — and the family quickly learns she last was seen at a somewhat seedy bar with Brett — allegiances

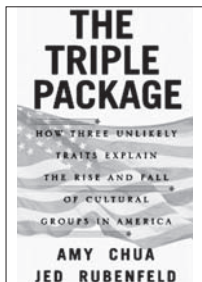
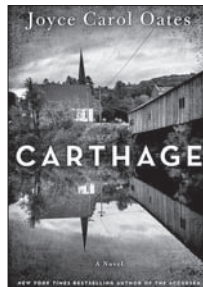
are formed among the family and the entire town.

Most of them have no problem believing that Brett harmed and possibly killed Cressida; others believe Cressida is to blame.

Oates delves into the minds of Zeno and Cressida, giving us a glimpse of why they think and act as they do. Arlette and Juliet are not as fully drawn, yet the author paints a scarily accurate picture of sibling rivalry and parental favoritism.

Brett might be the most compelling and mysterious figure for much of the tale. But once Oates takes us into his memories of what he endured during the war in Iraq, we understand a great deal more about his actions that help tear the Mayfield family apart.

Readers in search of a happy ending won't find it here, but they will find a well-told tale of family, grief and faith.



The Triple Package

Amy Chua and Jed Rubenfeld

More than two centuries ago, our Founding Fathers declared that all humans are born with the same inherent potential. Having the phrase "created equal" in our Declaration of Independence has been one the coolest things about being an American.

Now, married Yale law professors Amy Chua and Jed Rubenfeld have stepped forward to say that being "created equal" doesn't matter. Instead, their controversial new book argues that our cultural background largely determines our fate.

The luckiest Americans, they say, are born with "The Triple Package," a set of can-do values handed down to them by their families. Chua and Rubenfeld know that saying some of us are born to more ambitious cultures than others makes them sound "un-American," but they don't care. Chua's previous book, "The Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother," with its portrayal of Asian-American mothers as control freaks, seems to have emboldened the author and her husband.

"The Triple Package" is a grim book. It will convince few and offend many, though one senses the authors believe themselves to be too special to care.

Hector Tobar
Los Angeles Times



After I'm Gone

Laura Lippman

Few of us ever completely recover from the loss of a loved one. Life, of course, goes on and can be rich and fulfilling. But that loss never entirely disappears.

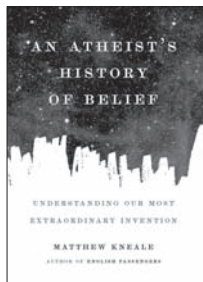
Laura Lippman explores how a disappearance affects a family for decades in the enthralling "After I'm Gone." Lippman tracks the history of five women united by the betrayal of one man. "After I'm Gone" is a quiet mystery — no car chases, barely a gun in sight — that derives its tension from the delicate balance that affects each woman.

"After I'm Gone" works well as a story of misplaced love, of consequences and the fragility of memory, as well as a solid private detective story. It also explores a history of women through the decades, from the late 1950s through 2012, wrapped around the rituals such as weddings, baby showers, bat mitzvahs that define and unite people, and sometimes pull them apart.

Lippman insightfully delves into each character, showing how each woman matures or falters through the years.

The tension-filled "After I'm Gone" succinctly examines the greatest mystery of all — crimes of the heart.

—Oline H. Cogdill
Sun-Sentinel



An Atheist's History of Belief

Matthew Kneale

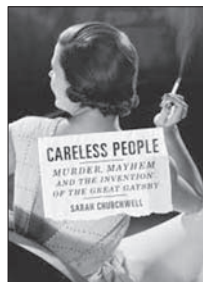
"As the son of a Manx Methodist atheist and a refugee German Jewish atheist," Matthew Kneale tells us in the first sentence of "An Atheist's History of Belief: Understanding Our Most Extraordinary Invention." "I have never been much of a believer." It's a great way to begin a book on faith, by staking out the territory of skepticism.

"From the earliest times," he reflects, "every religion has given people comfort by offering ways — so their followers believe — of keeping their worst nightmares at bay ... As people's lifestyles have altered, so have the things they most fear. It is the changes in our fears. I would argue, that have caused our religious ideas to change."

Kneale frames faith as an evolving story we tell ourselves. Beginning 33,000 years ago, with the development of animal spirits and trance worship, he works his way up to contemporary movements such as Scientology and al-Qaida, for which spirituality masks a more secular set of ends.

Here Kneale delivers a fairly straightforward, if selective, history of religion, which he depicts as an inherently political force.

David L. Ulin
Los Angeles Times



Careless People

Sarah Churchill

This zesty cocktail of history, biography and literary criticism so vividly captures the disordered existence of F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald during the 18-month sojourn on Long Island that inspired his greatest novel, many readers will close her book astonished that Scott managed to write "The Great Gatsby" at all.

It's even more astonishing to realize that "Gatsby" was published in 1925 to mixed reviews, many dismissing it as a superficial melodrama. Sarah Churchill well helps us see how critics could have so spectacularly misjudged Fitzgerald's masterpiece by elucidating its links to various events forgotten today but well known to contemporary readers, including a double murder in New Jersey in September 1922.

Churchill doesn't claim that "Gatsby" was directly inspired by the deaths of Episcopal minister Edward W. Hall and his parishioner-lover, Eleanor Mills. Rather, she contends that the story of the Hall-Mills murders is the novel's "phantom double ... a nightmare version of grotesque reality, unrelieved by the consolations of art." There are many such murky statements in Churchill's book, which is stronger on atmosphere than intellectual rigor.

Wendy Smith/Newsday



The Martian

Andy Weir

In the near future, mankind has successfully landed manned missions on Mars without mishap. The Ares 3 team, the third to explore the surface, has equipment, shelter and supplies for a two-month stay on the Red Planet. But a major windstorm changes their circumstances in a hurry in Andy Weir's debut novel, "The Martian," a story for readers who enjoy thrillers, science fiction, nonfiction or flat-out adventure.

The crew is forced to evacuate when dust begins to destroy their base camp. Mark Watney's pressure suit is torn by a piece of shrapnel, and the other crew members, assuming the worst, take off, leaving Watney behind. After the wind dies down and the dust settles, he regains consciousness and discovers that he's been abandoned — and the only person remaining on the planet.

After repairing his suit and the shelter, Watney realizes he must figure out how to survive so that he can be rescued by the crew of the next mission, which is scheduled to arrive in a few years.

Weir has created an authentic portrayal of the future of space travel, and Watney is the perfect character to follow as he struggles in an unknown and hostile environment.

—Jeff Ayers/AP

MOVIES

Shedding his bad-boy image

Colin Farrell turns romantic in fantasy film 'Winter's Tale'

By AMY KAUFMAN
Los Angeles Times

Colin Farrell wanted a cigarette, but he didn't have one on him. He was sitting poolside at the Roosevelt Hotel, which seemed like the kind of place where one would smoke. So he asked a pretty hostess if she had a pack; she did not.

"You want a cigarette?" asked an interloper standing nearby who had overheard the exchange.

A few minutes later, the stranger returned, cigarette in hand. He asked Farrell what movies the actor had coming up, adding that he was producing a few.

"Good luck with it, brother," Farrell replied. "Thanks for the smoke."

He sat back down in a bungalow and sighed.

"See," he said, "you really can get anything."

Well, sort of. Cigarettes and booze arguments and girls and hotel rooms have all been at Farrell's disposal since he became famous, he says. But the actor, who kicked a years-long substance abuse problem in 2005, has had a more difficult time earning respect as a leading man in Hollywood. He's certainly been given plenty of chances: In the past decade, he's starred in a reboot of the sci-fi classic "Total Recall," a remake of the vampire comedy "Fright Night" and the swords-and-sandals epic "Alexander." None of them worked at the box office.

With his latest effort, "Winter's Tale," Farrell is trying his hand at playing a romantic hero. In the film, based on Mark Helprin's lengthy fantasy novel, Farrell plays a charming thief who falls for an heiress stricken with tuberculosis.

Farrell, 37, has earned a reputation as a compelling actor with a surprisingly wide range. In December, he earned strong reviews for his supporting role as P.L. Travers' endearing alcoholic father in "Saving Mr. Banks." He has the looks for glitzy studio fare, but he often seems most at home in grittier independent films — "In Bruges," "The Way Back" — movies in which he has given some of his most well-regarded performances.

But even Farrell isn't sure where he fits into the movie business. His résumé of late, he admits, "paints a picture of a very confused actor who has no idea what the hell he's into." Here's what he does know: He doesn't want to do any more films with guns. Part of that might be because he has two young boys and he's begun to think about the effect violence in movies has on society. But he's also interested in telling different kinds of stories now — ones with fewer explosions.

"The scripts I'm drawn to now are ones that deal in a greater degree of emotional and psychological minutiae," he said. "I just don't know that I want to be part of things that are superficially entertaining. ... Without getting too high and mighty about it at all, I have to have a greater level of justification if I'm going to do something that involves that kind of thinking again."

He's not just saying that, either. In the weeks leading to production on "Saving Mr. Banks," director John Lee Hancock said, Farrell sent the filmmaker dozens of emails about his vision for the character.

"You don't often get letters from actors, and he was writing this beautiful stuff about what the character meant to him," Hancock recalled. "He's such a soulful guy with this Irish poet's soul that I totally believed he could play a father a little girl would idolize."

That Farrell is now able to come off believably as a role model of sorts is somewhat of a feat, given his history as a tabloid mainstay. Before he shipped off to rehab nine

years ago, he was known as the ultimate Hollywood bad boy. He spent two years living in the Chateau Marmont, when he "had more money than sense." He filmed a sex tape with a Playboy Playmate (which she eventually leaked) and showed up high on the set of "Miami Vice."

He's been clean for nearly a decade, but the stories trail him. Even though, as he put it, "the worst thing I've done since then is sneak a ... Subway sandwich into the ArcLight (a Hollywood multiplex). And even that was only a 6-inch."

Farrell has lived in L.A. for years now. Two of his sisters as well as his mom, whose apartment he drives past almost daily on Sunset Boulevard, moved here after he got famous. But his roots are in Ireland, where he grew up in a Dublin suburb, the son of a professional club soccer player. Farrell went on to train at the country's Gaieity School of Acting before landing his breakout role in Joel Schumacher's 2000 film

'I just don't know that I want to be part of things that are superficially entertaining.'

Colin Farrell

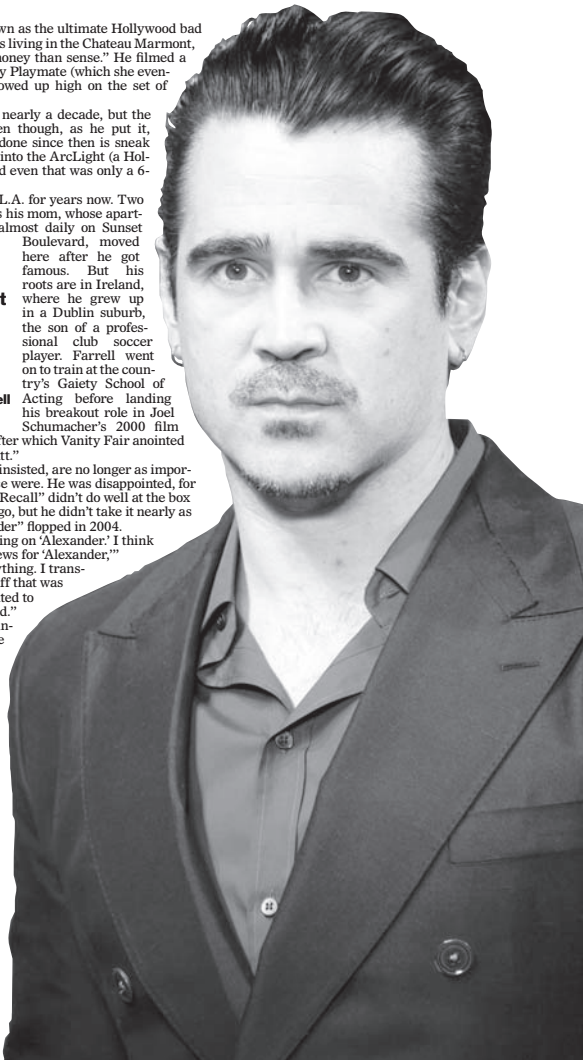
"Tigerland," shortly after which Vanity Fair anointed him "the Irish Brad Pitt."

Such labels, Farrell insisted, are no longer as important to him as they once were. He was disappointed, for instance, when "Total Recall" didn't do well at the box office a couple years ago, but he didn't take it nearly as hard as when "Alexander" flopped in 2004.

"I read every bad thing on 'Alexander.' I think I wrote some bad reviews for 'Alexander,'" he joked. "I read everything. I translated (stuff). I read stuff that was in Farsi because I wanted to know every single word."

Farrell already has another gig lined up: "The Lobster," a dystopian love story co-starring Rachel Weisz, which he'll begin filming in Ireland next month. And when that wraps, he'll come back to his home in Los Feliz, Calif., where he has his kids and his hikes and his movie nights — more, all told, than he's ever had outside the world of film.

"A genuinely interesting thing has happened to me in the last year or two. I'm paradoxically more into the work than I've ever been, and yet in a way it's less important to me than it's ever been."



Top: Jessica Brown Findlay and Colin Farrell star in "Winter's Tale," a story about miracles, crossed destinies and the battle between good and evil.

AP photos

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Sony counting on new game machine

By YURI KAGEYAMA
The Associated Press

TOKYO — PlayStation stands out among the long list of famous Sony brands as one that hasn't faded or succumbed to a nimble competitor. Months after hitting global markets, the latest version of the video-game console went on sale Saturday in Tokyo, a big shift from when Sony was ascendant enough to launch flagship products in Japan first.

The PlayStation 4's much-awaited arrival in Sony Corp.'s home market is the first time Japan did not get a major Sony game machine ahead of other markets. With much riding on the PS4's success, the commercial advantages of targeting overseas markets outweighed the sentimental pull of a hometown launch.

The PS4, Sony's first video-game console in seven years, went on sale in the U.S. and Europe in November. A small but enthusiastic crowd of about a dozen fans, some in game-inspired costumes,

attended a midnight countdown ceremony in Tokyo.

More than 80,000 people watched a live Web broadcast of the event, at the Sony Building in Tokyo's Ginza district. Most Japanese consumers will be picking up their machines at stores around the nation.

Sony officials say more time was needed to prepare game software attractive for Japanese, but analysts say Japan wasn't a priority for Sony's game division.

"I have made you all wait for so long," Hiroshi Kawano, Sony's chief of its game business in Japan and Asia, said before handing the console to the first customer in Japan.

The PS4 has proved a hit so far, selling 4.2 million units worldwide last year, outpacing rival Microsoft's Xbox One at 3 million.

But analysts say Sony, headed to a 110 billion yen (\$1.08 billion) loss for the fiscal year ending in March, needs more than a suc-

cessful game console to reverse its dimming fortunes.

The company rose from humble beginnings in 1946, with just 20 employees, to become one of the global as the country emerged from the debris of its defeat in World War II to become a manufacturing powerhouse.

But in recent years, out of Sony's long list of well-known brands — Walkman, Vaio, Bravia, Cyber-shot, Handycam, Aibo — only PlayStation has managed to hold its edge. Its share price is today just one-third of its 2008 value.

The Walkman portable audio player lost out to the iPod from Apple Inc. during the past decade as it fell behind in adopting the MP3 format.

Sony's Bravia TV section, despite boasting the company's top-notch image technology, has not made money for 10 years straight, despite repeated promises from executives to make it profitable.

Earlier this month, Sony an-

nounced it was selling its Vaio personal computer operations in the latest sign of its problems. It is keeping Bravia but making it a subsidiary company.

"I am just not sure anymore if there is anything Sony makes that can be counted on to produce growth," said Motobisha Ohno, a technology expert who heads Tokyo-based NewProject, which consults companies on software, Internet branding and other topics.

MARKET WATCH

Feb. 21, 2014

Dow Jones Industrials	-29.93
Nasdaq composite	-4.13
Standard & Poor's 500	-3.53
Russell 2000	+2.52
	1,164.63

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Feb. 24)	\$1.4063
Dollar buys (Feb. 24)	€0.7111
British pound (Feb. 24)	\$1.71
Japanese yen (Feb. 24)	¥99.00
South Korean won (Feb. 24)	₩1,046.00

Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3771
British pound	\$1.6659/£0.6003
Canada (dollar)	1.1107
China (Yuan)	0.6837
Denmark (Krone)	5.4386
Egypt (Pound)	0.6944
Euro	\$1.3718/€0.7290
Hong Kong (Dollar)	1.7556
Hungary (Forint)	227.31
Israel (Shekel)	3.1505
Japan (Yen)	102.31
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.2818
Norway (Krone)	6.0975
Philippines (Peso)	44.80
Poland (Zloty)	3.74
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7505
Singapore (Dollar)	1.2646
South Korea (Won)	1,074.95
Switzerland (Franc)	0.8892
Taiwan (Dollar)	32.57
Turkey (New Lira)	2.2044

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., currencies of other countries), the bank charges with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
3-month bill	0.07
3-month bond	0.05
30-year bond	3.69

WEATHER OUTLOOK



Sunday's US temperatures

City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	City	Hi	Lo	Wthr
Able, Tex	69	48	Pdly	Chatanooga	66	37	Cldy	Fort Wayne	31	20	Cldy	Louisville	47	37	Pdly	Pocatello	48	28	Cldy
Akron, Ohio	35	28	Cldy	Cheney	37	15	Cldy	Fresno	73	44	Cldy	Lubbock	67	36	Pdly	Portland, Maine	41	31	Pdly
Albany, N.Y.	43	30	Cldy	Chicago	24	13	Cldy	Goodland	38	20	Rain	Macon	69	41	Cldy	Portland, Ore.	47	33	Cldy
Albuquerque	65	36	Pdly	Cincinnati	43	34	Cldy	Grand Junction	50	26	Cldy	Madison	62	30	Pdly	Providence	45	34	Snow
Allentown, Pa.	45	30	Pdly	Cleveland	32	27	Cldy	Grand Rapids	24	14	Cldy	Medford	62	31	Pdly	Pueblo	51	24	Pdly
Amarillo	52	28	Cldy	Colorado Springs	48	23	Pdly	Great Falls	7	-2	Snow	Memphis	63	44	Cldy	Raleigh-Durham	71	42	Cldy
Anchorage	32	22	Cir	Columbia, S.C.	72	41	Cldy	Green Bay	17	2	Pdly	Miami Beach	84	72	Pdly	Rapid City	25	8	Cldy
Asheville	64	32	Cldy	Columbus, Ga.	68	44	Cldy	Greensboro, N.C.	68	41	Cldy	Midland-Odessa	75	44	Pdly	Roanoke	69	39	Cldy
Atlanta	65	43	Cldy	Concord, N.H.	41	28	Pdly	Hardtford Spgld	47	30	Cldy	Milwaukee	21	10	Pdly	Richmond	66	39	Cldy
Atlantic City	56	37	Cldy	Corpus Christi	81	64	Cldy	Havana	16	8	Snow	Missoula	24	14	Snow	Rochester	32	25	Pdly
Baltimore	57	36	Cldy	Dallas-Ft. Worth	71	57	Cldy	Honolulu	81	69	Cldy	Mobile	71	51	Pdly	Rockford	62	39	Pdly
Baton Rouge	76	58	Cldy	Dayton	38	29	Cldy	Houston	78	58	Cldy	Montgomery	69	46	Cldy	Sacramento	69	44	Cldy
Bilings	55	6	Snow	Daytona Beach	79	59	Cldy	Huntsville	69	39	Cldy	Nashville	62	40	Cldy	St. Louis	37	28	Cldy
Birmingham	69	44	Cldy	Denver	48	23	Pdly	Indianapolis	36	26	Cldy	New Orleans	74	60	Rain	St. Petersburg	79	65	Cldy
Bismarck	55	-1	Pdly	Des Moines	26	16	Cldy	Jackson, Miss.	70	49	Cldy	New York City	48	38	Cldy	St. Thomas	85	74	Pdly
Boise	52	32	Pdly	Detroit	27	20	Cldy	Jacksonville	74	51	Cldy	Newark	49	36	Cldy	Salt Lake City	56	36	Cldy
Boston	44	35	Cldy	Duluth	12	-1	Cldy	Juneau	28	10	Cldy	Norfolk, Va.	64	40	Cldy	San Antonio	56	36	Cldy
Bridgeport	46	32	Cldy	El Paso	75	49	Pdly	Kansas City	25	25	Cldy	North Platte	29	17	Snow	San Diego	79	49	Cldy
Brownsville	40	35	Cldy	Elkins	49	28	Cldy	Kearney	12	2	Cldy	Okla. City	42	22	Cldy	San Francisco	61	48	Cldy
Buffalo	29	23	Pdly	Erie	32	27	Cldy	Knoxville	37	27	Cldy	Omaha	30	16	Cldy	San Jose	66	54	Cldy
Burlington, Vt.	29	23	Pdly	Eugene	51	30	Cldy	Lake Charles	74	58	Cldy	Orlando	82	62	Cldy	San Jose	61	48	Cldy
Caribou, Maine	28	17	Cldy	Evansville	44	35	Cldy	Lansing	25	14	Pdly	Paducah	38	36	Cldy	Santa Fe	60	28	Cldy
Casper, Wyo.	38	9	Cldy	Fairbanks	10	-20	Cir	Las Vegas	73	48	Cldy	Pendleton	46	32	Cldy	Seattle	57	45	Cldy
Charleston, S.C.	72	48	Cldy	Fargo	8	5	Cir	Lexington	47	37	Cldy	Philadelphia	52	35	Pdly	Shreveport	74	53	Cldy
Charleston, W.Va.	56	37	Cldy	Flagstaff	57	25	Cldy	Lincoln	34	17	Cldy	Phoenix	82	54	Pdly				
Charlotte, N.C.	67	39	Cldy	Flint	24	14	Pdly	Little Rock	63	43	Cldy	Pittsburgh	39	30	Snow				
				Fort Smith	56	44	Cldy	Los Angeles	69	53	Pdly								

The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 14th Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

National temperature extremes
Hi: Fri., 87, Punta Gorda, Fla., and Vero Beach, Fla.
Lo: Fri., -16, Willow City, N.D.

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OPINION

Dems at war with an economic solution

By JAY AMBROSE

McClatchy-Tribune News Service

Whoopie. We're growing, we're growing. The annual economic rate during the final quarter of last year was 3.2 percent, way up from the year's average of 1.9 percent and enough to arouse hope about possibilities down the road.

It just could be we're headed for what some call "the 4 percent solution," but, of course, that's supposing President Barack Obama and his friends let such fabulous growth happen.

If they do, it could mean lots of new businesses, business expansion and jobs, jobs and more jobs. It could mean better living standards, more opportunities for the young, more advances in all kinds of worthwhile undertakings. That's one reason you hope the president sits down with Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and persuades him to do what's right.

The president himself finally learned to do a few things right on the free-trade front. He had balked at various agreements at one point because unions did not want to take more stuff we also make here, fearing members could be put out of work.

Dislocations do happen, but liberated trade generates enormous benefits for all involved, creating far more wealth and employment than trade clumsily constricted. Wanting to improve on a legacy of the worst economic recovery since World War II, the president pressed more fast on some negotiated deals and Reid stubbornly said nothing doing. He still bows to union pressure.

With friends like Reid, who needs en-

Obamacare lavishly does some good that could have been accomplished prudently and meanwhile afflicts us with numerous economic pains.

emies like tea party Republicans in the House? But then again, Obama can be his own worst enemy, as in doing his darnedest to curb an energy boom that could boost our economy like little we have ever seen. His administration has been playing footsie with environmentalists opposed to drilling on federal lands, and then there's the nose-thumbing of oil industry hope for the Keystone XL pipeline from Canada to Texas.

Despite three years for one study that demonstrated the pipeline's safety in eight volumes of scientific fact, Obama still we needed a new study of carbon emissions. We've had it, and it says there's nothing to worry about. What's next? A study on whether it's OK to cheat Americans out of prosperity when enviro-activists have quarrels with science?

On another matter, Obama did do the economy a temporary favor by his trick of "netting" laws? Without congressional approval under the pretense of practical reasons. He thereby further postponed Obamacare's scheme to make all kinds of new demands on businesses that would simultaneously be new forms of torture for

the economy. Thank you, replied briefly saved business owners steeling themselves for what will come in 2016, and "what a guy!" said fellow Democrats, understanding that this latest rescheduling is meant to help them that much more in this year's midterm elections.

The eventual hurt is nevertheless as sure as Obamacare is a disaster. The health act lavishly does some good that could have been accomplished prudently and meanwhile afflicts us with numerous economic pains. One that's lately become well known was that taxpayer-provided Obamacare goodies for some would be a heeded incentive to quit work.

The prediction is that the labor force will get smaller, making our productivity, growth and wealth smaller even though House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi then informed us that job-shirking is a wonderful way to pursue happiness. In other words, some should commute, sweat and pay taxes so others can find their way to the hammock.

There are all kinds of other means by which a confused administration can help stave off the 4 percent solution, such as more regulatory stupidities, immigration reforms that fail to give additional preference to needed skills, taxation that makes us less competitive, refusal to restructure entitlements and prompting family breakdown with poorly devised welfare programs.

We the people must hang in there despite all that, but at some point we need to elect more officials who actually aid the public cause.

Jay Ambrose is an op-ed columnist for McClatchy-Tribune.

Reward workers, not traders, for productivity

Combating inequality must become the primary goal of corporate tax reform.

By HAROLD MEYERSON

The United Auto Workers' failure to organize the employees at Volkswagen's plant in Chattanooga, Tenn., has been greeted with predictable hosannas from the sworn enemies of American unions. Survey their celebrity columns, though, and you won't find the slightest consideration of most Americans' primary economic problem: How do workers get a raise in today's economy? With the rate of unionization so low that even unionized employees have trouble winning good contracts, how can workers profit from the gains in their productivity? What will it take for workers to regain the power to reap what they sow?

In recent decades, they've reaped precious little. Between 1947 and 1973 — roughly the one period of union strength in U.S. history — productivity increased by 97 percent and workers' compensation (that's wages paid to economists Robert Gordon and Ian Deane-Becker, they have gone entirely to the wealthiest 10 percent of Americans — increasingly in the form of capital gains and dividends. Wages today account for the lowest share of the nation's economy, and profits the highest, since World War II.

If no longer to workers, where have those gains from productivity gone? According to economists Robert Gordon and Ian Deane-Becker, they have gone entirely to the wealthiest 10 percent of Americans — increasingly in the form of capital gains and dividends. Wages today account for the lowest share of the nation's economy, and profits the highest, since World War II. The conventional wisdom among critics of unions is that the decline in workers' income is their own fault. Today's workers, we're told, lack the skills to compete in the harsh new economy. But with all the gains in productivity accruing to the top 10 percent, and with most of those gains coming in capital rather than labor income, it's unlikely that schooling explains

all this inequality. Is the difference in the rewards to investors and workers really a matter of training? Do the traders overseeing the computer programs that buy and sell stocks every few nano-seconds have a more legitimate claim to cashing in on workers' productivity gains than the workers themselves? Or is it that workers, without unions, have lost the power to realize the rewards from their work?

In his Wall Street Journal column on Wednesday, The Brookings Institution's William Galston wrote: "For the sake of economic growth, social mobility and political stability, we must think more boldly about reformatting the connection between compensation and productivity." Galston proposed linking corporations' tax rates to their compensation strategies: Firms that reward workers for productivity gains would be taxed at lower rates than firms that do not.

Galston is not a man of the left — indeed, he was the leading intellectual light of the centrist Democratic Leadership Council as it paved the way for Bill Clinton's presidency. But his proposal is one that should unite and galvanize Democrats, both centrist and liberal. Democrats have long said that theirs is the party that promotes broadly shared prosperity. Strengthening unions has been one of their primary tools in realizing that goal and should remain so. But they also need to find other ways to link productivity increases to Americans' incomes, and using the tax code is a good way to do it.

Let me suggest a few ways that could hap-

pen. The Securities and Exchange Commission is expected to soon issue an order, mandated by the Dodd-Frank financial reform act, requiring every corporation to publish annually the ratio between its CEO's compensation and the median pay of its employees. Once that median pay is public knowledge, Congress could create a lower tax rate for companies that increase their median wage in line with the annual increase in the nation's productivity. To be sure, companies could game that system by reducing workers' wages — thereby reducing the median — and then giving workers that productivity increase to qualify for the tax break without actually raising wages. To offset this, Congress could also cut taxes on companies with a low ratio between CEO pay and median pay — something that could persuade CEOs not to cut their workers' wages.

For years, discussions about rising inequality and reforming corporate taxes may as well have been taking place on separate planets. But combating inequality must become the primary goal of corporate tax reform. Raising the minimum wage would help millions of underpaid workers. Remedying the systematic underpayment of the great majority of Americans whose pay is both higher than the minimum but nonetheless stagnant, however, could best be done — and in the absence of union power perhaps can only be done — through rewarding corporations that link increased productivity to wages and taxing more heavily those that don't.

The Senate Finance Committee, which has jurisdiction over taxes, has a new chairman: Democrat Ron Wyden, of Oregon. Senator, take it away.

Harold Meyerson is editor-at-large of The American Prospect. This column first appeared in The Washington Post.

OPINION

Financial sanctions best way to hit N. Korea

BY JOSHUA STANTON
AND SUNG-YOON LEE

Calls for action have followed a United Nations report that the North Korean regime is culpable for "unspeakable atrocities" and crimes against humanity, including the starvation and murder of millions of people over the past 20 years. China has already said it would block a referral to the International Criminal Court. But the world still has a way to pressure Pyongyang to modify its behavior.

Many believe that U.S. sanctions against North Korea are maxed out. In fact, U.S. sanctions are relatively weak. There are no travel sanctions against North Korea (as with Cuba) nor any against human rights violators (as with Sudan, Iran and Belarus). Critically, there are no broad-based, third-party sanctions against North Korea's exports or financial sector. Iran and Myanmar are designated as primary money-laundering "concerns" under the Patriot Act, which restricts their access to the global financial system. But North Korea, the world's most notorious counterfeiter and money-lauder, is not. Import sanctions were relaxed between 2008 and 2011, and Americans can still export to North Korea if they obtain a license.

Opponents of sanctions argue that they would harm the people, particularly North Koreans. But North Koreans are not hungry because their government is poor. Kim Jong Un has more than \$1 billion in European banks and hundreds of millions more in China. In the 1990s, when an estimated 600,000 to 2.5 million North Koreans starved to death, Kim Jong Il bought dozens of new warships but impeded the delivery of food aid. The World Food Program sought \$98 million last year to feed hungry North Koreans. In 2012 alone, by South Korean government estimates, Kim Jong Un spent \$1.3 billion on his missile programs, an amount that could have eliminated North Korea's food deficit for years.

Although multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions ban North Korea from importing luxury items, Kim recently spent \$300 million on a water park, a fitness center, a dolphin aquarium, a 3-D cinema and a ski resort stocked with Canadian snowmobiles.

There is good reason to believe that cutting Pyongyang's links to the global financial system could force changes in its behavior. In September 2005, the U.S. Treasury sanctioned a Chinese bank for laundering money, including counterfeit dollars, for then-leader Kim Jong Il. The sanctions blocked the bank's access to corresponding accounts in U.S. financial institutions that led to the global financial system; this caused a run on the bank and nearly destroyed it. Other banks around the world, questioned by the Treasury Department about their North Korean deposits, began to block or close those accounts. Soon, Kim Jong Il was financially isolated. He began selling his gold reserves to sustain his regime. One North Korean diplomat told a U.S. counterpart, "You finally found a way to hurt us."

The bipartisan North Korea Sanctions Enforcement Act would block the offshore accounts that pay for Kim Jong Un's extravagant lifestyle, weapons programs and the secret police, border guards and others who terrorize the North Korean people. Kim's rule has been marked by brutal purges and crackdowns. Financial pressure could undermine his capacity to seal borders, frighten his people and buy the loyalty of North Korea's elites.

A financial strategy also would be harder for China to undermine than a diplomatic strategy or traditional trade sanctions. In 2005, the U.S. Treasury sanctioned Chinese banks that shunned North Korean deposits that were targeted by the United States. The Chinese government may not share Washington's or Seoul's security or humanitarian goals, but Chinese banks would not risk their access to the global economy to save Kim. And without the help of Chinese banks, Beijing



JON CHOI JIN/AP

North Koreans bow to the statues of late leader Kim Jong Il, right, and his father, North Korea's founder Kim Il Sung, in Pyongyang on Feb. 16 as the nation marked the anniversary of the birth of Kim Jong Il.

would find it difficult to continue propping up Pyongyang.

Financial sanctions should aim to force the regime to make better decisions about North Korea's wealth, to add an additional deterrent to protect the United States and its allies and to present Kim with a clear choice between reform and collapse.

Diplomacy has failed to curb North Korea's growing threat. Pyongyang is on the brink of nuclear breakout. It may be helping Iran achieve the same goal. It has contributed to Syria's weapons programs. It has abducted foreign nationals. And governments that make war against their own people eventually look for new victims.

Financial pressure was key to bring-

ing Iran to the bargaining table. It could give diplomats the leverage they need with Pyongyang. Improvements in human rights should be an essential first test of North Korea's acceptance of transparency. To get there, the Obama administration should lead the world in denying the Kim dynasty the tools it uses to brutalize its people and threaten the world.

Joshua Stanton, a lawyer, did work for the House Foreign Affairs Committee last year regarding North Korea, including contributing to the North Korea Sanctions Enforcement Act. Sung-Yoon Lee is an assistant professor of Korean studies at Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. The views expressed are solely their own. This column first appeared in The Washington Post.

Obama's diplomacy crashing, burning in Mideast

BY JOHN BOLTON

President Barack Obama has three significant Middle East diplomatic initiatives under way, treating, respectively, Iran's nuclear weapons program; Syria's deadly, exhausting conflict; and the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian dispute. Into these negotiations, Obama and his administration have poured enormous amounts of American prestige, time and effort.

Although rarely considered collectively, these three efforts constitute a significant strategic package for a White House that all too often hardly bothers with foreign policy. These initiatives truly reflect Obama's view of America's international role: It is a world of rhetoric and talk, not power.

Thus, Iran has not feared U.S. military strikes against its nuclear weapons program, and now, as a result of November's interim agreement, it does not even fear international economic sanctions. Neither the Bashar Assad regime nor al-Qaida terrorists in Syria see any prospect of material U.S. intervention. And the main sticking point in the Israeli-Palestinian matter is against Israel, heretofore Washington's strongest regional ally.

As described below, all three of Obama's diplomatic maneuvers are based on errors and will almost certainly fail. And what will happen then? Failing on one is bad enough, but failing on all three is catastrophic. And it is no answer to say that deals may

yet be signed. Covering failure with a piece of paper changes nothing. The Iran interim agreement, for example, is not a partial success simply because its later collapse will be due merely to poor implementation. Without a real meeting of minds, there is no true deal, as Iran's all-too-evident disdains repeatedly demonstrate.

The coming crash of U.S. diplomacy is not idle speculation about a remote future. Our declining prestige is apparent globally; when all three Mideast negotiations fail conclusively, America's influence will fall further. Friends and adversaries alike are reluctantly accepting that increasingly, particularly because the underlying causes of the three impending failures will spell trouble and misfortune elsewhere.

Obama's ongoing failures could have been avoided. A less ideological, more realistic and clear-eyed leader would comprehend American power and interests, knowing how to use the former to protect the latter, rather than making Obama's basic mistakes.

Obama's first error: misreading your adversary. There was never any chance Iran could be negotiated out of a nuclear weapons capability it has pursued for nearly 30 years. Efforts during the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations demonstrated how Iran deftly uses negotiations to gain political legitimacy, buy time to continue work on its nuclear program and evade international punishment. Hassan Rouhani followed this playbook as Iran's

chief nuclear negotiator 10 years ago. He is doing so again today as Iran's president.

The second error: not knowing who your adversaries are. Obama argued for three years that Russia shared his objective of a peaceful transition from the Assad regime in Syria to something else. This was never true. Moscow's support for Assad (as well as Iran's, directly and through Hezbollah) guaranteed he would only depart first. The U.S. could either have aided Syria's opposition or tackled the problem's root cause: the mullahs' regime in Tehran. Obama chose to do neither. His equivocation regarding Syria's chemical weapons program has provoked giggles or dismay at White House weakness.

The third error: not knowing who your friends are. The Palestinians lack legitimate governing institutions capable of hard decisions, including making perilous concessions and compromises, and overcoming resistance by Hamas and other terrorists. Without such institutions, no long-term solution is possible. Negotiating with the Palestinian Authority has less substance than negotiating with a hologram. Perversely, however, Obama treats Israel as the problem.

Not apprehending these realities or foreseeing their consequences debilitates the U.S., discourages its allies and emboldens its adversaries. The coming collapse of all three of Obama's negotiations will convince foreign governments that his policies are dooming Washington's Mideast

influence to precipitous decline. And since appearance is reality in international politics, America's ability to influence events — in Egypt for example, where the military government is reverting to pre-Sadat days, purchasing arms from Russia — will sink further. Moreover, the opportunity costs of not focusing on threats elsewhere, such as China's belligerent territorial claims in its coastal waters, are enormous.

Iran will emerge more powerful, vying on deliverable nuclear weapons, while still financing and arming terrorists worldwide. Assad seems likely to survive, which is bad enough by itself, but it will be compounded by the affirmation it affords Iranian and Russian strength. Israel will trust Washington even less than now, and ironically, Palestinians will be even more anti-American because Obama will not be able to deliver to them the Israeli concessions he predicted.

Perhaps this prospect of massive strategic failure will awaken Obama and America as a whole, but that seems unlikely. Instead, the increasing danger is that only another 9/11, another disaster, will produce the necessary awakening. There is tragedy ahead for our country if we continue on this course.

John Bolton, a former U.S. ambassador to the U.N., is a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and the author of "Surrender Is Not an Option: Defending America at the United Nations and Abroad." This column first appeared in the Los Angeles Times.

Sports on AFN

Go to the American Forces network website for the most up-to-date TV schedules.
myafn.net

Tennis

Delray Beach International

Friday
At Delray Beach Stadium
& Tennis Center
Purse: \$550,000 (W750)
Surface: Hard-Outdoor
Singles

Quarterfinals
Kevin Anderson (4), South Africa, def. Marko Matosevic, Australia, 6-7 (3), 6-3, 6-2.
Steve Johnson, United States, def. Feliciano Lopez (6), Spain, 6-3, 6-2.
Mario Cilic (7), Croatia, def. Teymuraz Gabashvili, Russia, 6-2, 6-3.
John Isner (2), United States, def. Rhyne Williams, United States, 4-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Rio Open

Friday
At Jockey Club Brasileiro
Rio de Janeiro
Purse: Men, \$195 million (W7500)
Women, \$250,000 (W750)
Surface: Clay-Outdoor
Singles

Men
Quarterfinals
Alexander Dolgopob, Ukraine, def. Fabio Fognini (3), Italy, 6-1, 6-1.
David Ferrer (2), Spain, def. Thomaz Bellucci, Brazil, 4-6, 6-3, 6-2.
Nicola Pietrangeli (8), Spain, def. Tommy Robredo (4), Spain, 6-1, 6-3.
Rafael Nadal (1), Spain, def. Joao Sousa, Portugal, 6-1, 6-2, 6-2.

Open 13

Friday
At Palais des Sports
Marseille, France
Purse: \$650,000 (W7500)
Surface: Hard-Indoor
Singles

Quarterfinals
Richard Gasquet (1), France, def. Ivan Dodig (9), Croatia, 7-5, 6-3.
Ernesto Gulbis (3), Latvia, def. Nicolas Pietrangeli (8), Spain, 6-3, 6-2.
John Isner (2), United States, def. Edouard Roger-Vasselin (6), France, 6-7 (3), 6-2, 6-2.
Nicola Pietrangeli (8), Spain, def. Michael Llodera, Germany, 6-4, 6-3.

Dubai Championships

Friday
At Dubai Tennis Stadium
Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Purse: \$2 million (Hard-Outdoor)
Surface: Hard-Outdoor
Singles

Seminifinals
Venus Williams, United States, def. Caroline Wozniacki (8), Denmark, 6-3, 6-4.
Alize Cornet, France, def. Serena Williams (1), United States, 6-4, 6-4.

Pro hockey

NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Boston	58	33	20	5	176	145
Tampa Bay	58	33	20	5	176	145
Philadelphia	58	33	20	5	176	145
Toronto	60	32	22	6	170	182
Pittsburgh	58	29	24	11	164	153
Detroit	58	29	24	11	164	153
Florida	58	22	29	11	139	183
Buffalo	58	17	34	8	118	187

Metropolitan Division

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
N.Y. Rangers	59	32	24	3	167	156
Washington	58	32	24	3	167	156
Carolina	58	27	22	9	163	169
New Jersey	58	24	23	13	161	175
Atlanta	58	20	22	18	140	182

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Central Division

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
St. Louis	60	35	14	8	183	138
Chicago	60	35	14	8	183	138
Minnesota	58	31	16	14	174	153
Dallas	58	27	21	10	164	184
San Jose	58	26	24	10	164	184
Nashville	58	22	26	10	146	180

Pacific Division

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Anaheim	60	41	14	5	187	146
Los Angeles	59	31	22	6	180	175
Phoenix	58	27	24	10	163	189
Vancouver	60	27	24	9	163	189
Calgary	58	22	29	9	137	179
Edmonton	58	20	22	18	140	182

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime.
Feb. 2-25
Olympic break

College basketball

Friday's men's scores

EAST

Columbia 70, Brown 68
Harvard 83, Penn 63
Iona 80, Rider 77
Northwestern 57, Dartmouth 57
Siena 67, Manhattan 63
Yale 68, VCU 75
Yale 68, Cornell 65

SOUTH

Centre 71, Hendrix 53
Florida Gulf Coast 75, Mercer 61
Lipscomb 70, N. Kentucky 68
Columbia 70, Brown 68
Kennesaw 57, Stetson 63
Lipscomb 70, N. Kentucky 68
Mississippi 84, Berry 70
Sewanee 81, Rhodes 69, OT

MIDWEST

Crown (Minn.) 92, Martin Luther 88, OT
Minn. Duluth 81, Bemidji 65
Minn. St.-Manitowish 102, Sioux Falls 101
Minn. St.-Moorehead 65, Minot 55
Minn.-Morris 84, Bethany Lutheran 66
Northern St. (SD) 72, May 69
Northwestern (Minn.) 90, Northland 39

Oakland 86, Ill.-Chicago 71

SW Minnesota 37, Grand Concordia 55

PJ 67

Upper Iowa 104, Augustana (SD) 100

Winnipeg 75, Wayne (Neb.) 57

Wright 55, Detroit 61

CL of Idaho 114, Evergreen 81

Northwestern 59, Oregon (One) 64

Warner Pacific 69, Oregon 54

EXHIBITION

Northwest U. 59, E. Oregon 58

Friday's women's scores

EAST

Columbia 66, Brown 59
Fairfield 72, Manhattan 52
Siena 67, Cornell 52
Penn 63, Harvard 50
Penn 67, Dartmouth 46
St. Joseph's (LI) 58, UNY-Poly 49
UIC 52, Nazareth 41
Yale 68, Cornell 52

SOUTH

Centre 81, Hendrix 38
Mississippi 69, Berry 52
Rhodes 54, Sewanee 44
Augustana (SD) 97, Upper Iowa 83
Bemidji 72, Minn. Duluth 50
Minn. St.-Manitowish 65, SW Minnesota 37

Green Bay 74, Bradley 71

Duke 59, Cleveland 56

Indiana St. 73, Missouri 51

Martin Luther 88, Crown (Minn.) 46

Minn.-Morris 67, Bethany Lutheran 52

Minn. St. 78, Wayne (Neb.) 57

N. Iowa 73, Loyola of Chicago 49

Northern St. (SD) 73, May 59

Northwestern (Minn.) 64, Northland 39

St. Cloud St. 87, Minn.-Crookston 46

St. Scholastica 80, North Central (Minn.) 63

Wayne (Neb.) 83, Winona 51

Wichita St. 85, Illinois 67

Brooklyn 77, Warner Pacific 51

Stanford 64, Southern Cal 59

Utah 52, Arizona 47

Washington 108, Oregon 100

EXHIBITION

E. Oregon 77, Northwest U. 66
Minn. St. (Mankato) 82, Sioux Falls 72

College hockey

Friday's scores

EAST

Holy Cross 5, American International 3

SOUTH

Northeast 3, Mercyhurst 3, OT

Robert Morris 6, Canisius 1

Sacred Heart 5, Bentley 4

St. Lawrence 2, Cornell 3

Dartmouth 2, Brown 1, OT

Yale 5, Harvard 2

Colgate 6, Princeton 1

Cornell 2, Quinnipiac 1

St. Lawrence 2, Cornell 3

St. Lawrence 2, Cornell 3

St. Lawrence 2, Cornell 3

St. Lawrence 2, Cornell 3

St. Lawrence 2, Cornell 3

St. Lawrence 2, Cornell 3

St. Lawrence 2, Cornell 3

St. Lawrence 2, Cornell 3

St. Lawrence 2, Cornell 3

St. Lawrence 2, Cornell 3

St. Lawrence 2, Cornell 3

St. Lawrence 2, Cornell 3

St. Lawrence 2, Cornell 3

Auto racing

NextEra Energy Resources 250

NASCAR Camping World Trucks

Friday

At Daytona International Speedway

Daytona Beach, Fla.

(Start position in parentheses)

(1) Kyle Busch, Toyota, 100 laps, 119 rating, 0 points, \$70,870

(2) Timmy Thompson, Toyota, 100, 129, \$52,250

(3) Johnny Sauter, Toyota, 100, 101, 2, \$37,226

(4) Ryan Truex, Chevrolet, 100, 100, 8, \$27,700

(5) Ryan Blaney, Ford, 100, 101, 2, \$37,226

(6) Ryan Blaney, Ford, 100, 101, 2, \$37,226

(7) Kyle Busch, Toyota, 100, 119, 119, 0, \$70,870

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(69) Johnny S

SPORTS BRIEFS

Kyle Busch wins season-opening truck race

The Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Kyle Busch made a little history at a pretty big track.

Busch used a perfectly timed pass to win the NASCAR Truck Series season opener Friday night, becoming the first driver to win an ARCA race, a truck race, a Nationwide Series race and a Sprint Cup race at Daytona International Speedway.

Busch edged Timothy Peters in the final few feet to provide one of the closest finishes in series history.

Peters was leading coming out of the final turn and did all he could to block Busch, even nearly forcing him into the wall. But Busch didn't blink and drove by Peters just before the finish line.

It was Busch's 36th Truck Series victory and first at Daytona.

"Well, it sounds awesome," said Busch, acknowledging he would rather be a Daytona 500 winner. "This has been eluding me. I finally got one."

Busch also gave Toyota its eighth consecutive Truck Series win at Daytona. It was the automaker's fourth victory in four races during Speedweeks. Busch's Joe Gibbs Racing teammates, Denny Hamlin and Matt Kenseth have the other three.

Johnny Sauter was third, followed by Ryan Truex, Ron Hornaday Jr. and Ryan Blaney. Defending series champion Matt Crafton was 13th.

This one will be remembered for the finish, which was the series' closest in its 15-year history at Daytona. It was the eighth-closest margin in series history.

McDowell survives in Match Play

MARANA, Arizona — Not even Graeme McDowell can believe he's still alive in the Match Play Championship.

For the third straight round, McDowell pulled off another improbable escape to advance to



JOHN RAOUS/AP

Kyle Busch, top, beats Timothy Peters to the finish line Friday to win the NASCAR Truck Series race at Daytona International Speedway.

the quarterfinals Friday at Dove Mountain. This time, all he had to do was win the last two holes against Hunter Mahan to force overtime and make a 20-foot par putt to stay in the match on the 20th hole. He won with a birdie on the 21st hole.

In three matches, McDowell has played 58 holes and has never had the lead until he won.

Jordan Spieth beat Matt Kuchar. Ernie Els ousted Jason Dufner. Victor Dubuisson beat Bubba Watson, and Rickie Fowler won on the last hole against Sergio Garcia. The other winners

were Louis Oosthuizen and Jason Day.

In other golf news:

■ Swede Anna Nordqvist shot a 5-under 67 at the LPGA Thailand on Saturday for a 4-stroke lead over top-ranked Inbee Park and American Michelle Wie at Chonburi, Thailand.

The 27th-ranked Nordqvist sprinkled her third round Saturday at the Siam Country Club with four birdies and an eagle on the 10th against a bogey on No. 5.

Leading since the first round, Nordqvist has an overall 11-under 205. She is chasing her first win

on the U.S. LPGA Tour since 2009.

Par shot 67 and Wie 69.

CEO York denies 49ers tried to trade Harbaugh

SAN FRANCISCO — San Francisco 49ers CEO Jed York denied his team nearly traded coach Jim Harbaugh to the Cleveland Browns last month for draft picks.

York shot down a report Friday by Pro Football Talk, posting on Twitter: "Is this on the record? Report isn't true." Pro Football Talk reported that a deal was in place that would have sent Harbaugh to coach Cleveland, but he opted to stay put. The 50-year-old Harbaugh just completed his third season of a \$25 million, five-year contract and declined to address the subject of an extension or any scheduled talks after the season with York, who had said he hoped to meet with the coach.

The 49ers (14-5) lost to the NFC West rival and eventual Super Bowl champion Seahawks in the NFC championship game, 23-17.

Skier Maze says this is her last Olympics

KRASNAYA POLYANA, Russia — Double gold medalist Tina Maze of Slovenia says the Sochi Olympics will be her final Winter Games.

The 30-year-old Maze, who tied for victory in the women's downhill and won the giant slalom, says "this is my last Olympics. This is it."

Maria Hoefl-Riesch of Germany, who won the super-combined, has also said she would not return for the 2018 Pyeongchang Olympics.

Maze completed her fourth Olympics in the slalom on Friday. Her eighth-place finish was her worst result in five events.

Maze also won two silver medals at the 2010 Vancouver Olympics, in super-G and giant slalom.

Zetterberg likely out for rest of regular season

SOCHI, Russia — The Detroit Red Wings don't expect Henrik Zetterberg to play again during the regular season.

Zetterberg had back surgery Friday in New York to remove a fragmented disk.

"I don't anticipate he'll be ready to play in any games of the regular season," Red Wings general manager Ken Holland told The Associated Press on Saturday. "I'm hopeful that we can play our way into the playoffs and that he'll be back, but that's down the road."

The Red Wings and Swedish Olympic hockey team captain played once at the Sochi Games before pulling out because of the injury.

Holland is hopeful Zetterberg's back injury does not prematurely end his career.

"I'm told it has nothing to do with his career," Holland said. "But the surgery is something that needed to be done and he'll be as good as new."

Miami to investigate possible NCAA violation

CORAL GABLES, Fla. — The University of Miami said Saturday it will investigate a possible secondary NCAA rule violation by the football program.

The matter involves at least one assistant coach watching a voluntary workout from a distance Friday, which members of the media witnessed while covering a nearby Miami baseball game.

The school announced the Hurricanes' compliance staff will investigate and report any violation to the NCAA.

Last fall, the Hurricanes began three years of probation and lost nine football scholarships following a long NCAA investigation because of an extra-benefits scandal involving a booster.

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CHRIS YOUNG, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

BOB LEVERONE/AF

NFL

QB Manziel all business at NFL combine

Heisman Trophy winner working to shed brash 'Hollywood' image

By MICHAEL MAROT
The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Johnny Manziel shed the Hollywood image Friday — maybe for good.

The brash-talking, Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback from Texas A&M entered and exited the Lucas Oil Stadium media room through a back door. He ignored the television screens around him, monitors that provided live coverage of his media availability and that had been showing his college football highlights prior to his arrival.

And it seemed Johnny Football had suddenly transformed himself into Johnny Business.

"This is a job now. There are guys' families, coaches' families and jobs and all kinds of things on the line," he said in a stern, deliberate voice at the NFL's scouting combine. "For me, it won't be a hard thing to kick. I'm extremely focused on whatever organization I'll be at and really pouring my heart out trying to be football 24-7 with that team."

What he has to prove now is that he means every word.

Since bursting onto the national stage in his Heisman-winning freshman season, Manziel has been living large.

He's been courted at NBA games, played golf at Pebble Beach, partied in Cabo and become a feature attraction for memorabilia hounds. He's participated in dunk contests, publicly complained about life in College Station, Texas, developed a friendship with Tom Brady and never been shy about — anything.

But in Indianapolis, none of that stuff means a thing.

Here, scouts and NFL front-office executives are treating Manziel as just another draft hopeful

By the numbers

4,116

Yards Manziel threw for last season at Texas A&M. Manziel threw for 3,706 yards during his Heisman-winning 2012 campaign.

37

Touchdowns thrown by Manziel last season, compared to 26 in 2012. He also upped his passer rating from 155.3 to 172.9.

SOURCE: The Associated Press

in the standard blue-and-green warm-up suit. They'll see how he runs, how he tests and perhaps most important, how he answers questions.

Most teams want to know whether this 21-year-old, fun-loving football star is mature enough to handle millions of dollars and live up to the tag of franchise quarterback. Friday's media availability may have been a good start.

Rather than showcasing his bravado, Manziel, at times, sounded almost apologetic for some of the things he's said and done recently.

"The main thing I wanted to portray that was more in the subplots of the article," he said, when asked about a story in which he seemed to warn Houston about bypassing



MICHAEL CONROY/AP

Texas A&M quarterback and 2012 Heisman Trophy winner Johnny Manziel answers a question during a news conference at the NFL scouting combine in Indianapolis on Friday.

him with the No. 1 overall pick, "was that whatever team I do end up with, whenever I do get to that team, whenever I am in that organization, each one of those guys is now my teammate, my brother and if I'm on the field with those guys, I'm going to try to be the best football player I can be."

When it became clear the 2012 Heisman winner measured in at 5-foot-11 1/2 inches, 207 pounds, shorter and lighter than his listed college measurements of 6-1 and 210, and shorter and lighter than many NFL teams seek in a starting quarterback, he wouldn't confirm the measurements. Instead, he explained that he has more heart and passion for this sport than anyone in the draft.

Not all the news was bad for Manziel.

Though he stands about five inches shorter than Blake Bortles, another quarterback vying to wind up in Houston, Manziel came in with bigger hands — a potentially big advantage on draft weekend.

"I think it (hand size) is something that is highly underrated," said Arizona coach Bruce Arians, who has tutored Peyton Manning, Ben Roethlisberger and Andrew Luck among others. "It depends on where you play. If you play in Lucas Oil, not too bad. Now, if you play in Green Bay and you struggle with controlling a football when it's cold and wet, that's a problem. That goes into the evaluation process hard."

There's little doubt about Manziel's skills.

In 2012, he broke the SEC's single-season record for total offense (5,116 yards), became the fifth player in FBS history to throw for 3,000 yards and rush for 1,000 in one season and then set an all-bowl rushing record for a quarterback (229 yards).

After his jet-setting offseason and an NCAA investigation into autographs on memorabilia, critics contended a distracted Manziel regressed. But he actually threw for more yards (4,116), more touchdowns (37) and wound up with a better passing efficiency (172.9) in 2013 than he did in 2012.

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NASCAR

Junior: No Daytona 500 wins since 2004 season

FROM BACK BAGE

Earnhardt was nearly as hot as these two down the stretch, and he's hoping to find some carry-over into "The Great American Race."

He won the 2004 Daytona 500, the first of his six victories that season. But he has just four victories since and no multi-win seasons.

"It doesn't seem like it's been that long, but time goes by pretty fast," Earnhardt said. "It seems like these last several years have really flown by, especially when you enjoy yourself. They seemed to grind out when you're not running too well, but the last couple of years have flown by pretty fast."

Earnhardt made the Chase the last three years, becoming increasingly comfortably at Hendrick while working with crew chief Steve Letarte. Together, they turned around the No. 88 Chevrolet and made it a contender.

But Letarte announced last month he will step down after this season, leaving to become a race analyst for NBC Sports in 2015. So this year could be the ultra-popular driver's best chance to win his first Cup championship.

"The biggest thing that stands out is just how well he and Junior connect," said fellow Hendrick driver Jeff Gordon, who previously worked with Letarte. "You want to be able to have that experience as well as knowledge. He's a smart guy, and you want to have that on your side in any shape or form, whether as a crew chief or in another role at Hendrick."

That connection led Earnhardt to finish second to Jamie McMurray (2010), Kenseth (2012) and

Johnson (2013) in recent years at Daytona.

"They've all been close," he said. "In none of those races did I have a situation where I went, 'I let it slip by. I messed up right there.' Most of the time, we run our guts out and come to the finish line and we just never had a chance to make a move on the guy leading the race."

"When you make that move or have a chance and you don't do the right thing and you lose, that's difficult to swallow. Haven't been in that situation, even though we've run second."

Recalling how those unfolded, Earnhardt already knows where he wants to be on the final lap Sunday — up front.

"As far as trying to win one of these races — or not run second again — I think we need to be up front," Earnhardt said. "We're not far enough toward the front. When we've run second, we've come from third or fourth or fifth or sixth those last few laps."

"You're not going to win the race from back there. You might run second, but you aren't going to win. You need to be leading the race. I would much rather be leading the Daytona 500 inside of five laps to go than be anywhere else."

And if he is in that position, he just might wind up in Daytona's Victory Lane again.

"You never forget exactly what that day is like," he said. "It all floods back to you as soon as you come back for Speedweeks each season. It's very fresh, and you're constantly reminded I think by what just goes on during Speedweeks how important that victory is and how much you would like to get it again. It's definitely fresh."



PHOTOS BY TERRY RENNA/AP

Austin Dillon, above, seen holding up the pole award with car owner and grandfather Richard Childress after qualifying for the pole position in the Daytona 500, and Kyle Larson, seen below climbing into his car before a Dayton 500 practice, headline an impressive NASCAR rookie class.

Leaders of the new school

Dillon, Larson head a remarkable group of NASCAR first-timers

By DAN GELSTON

The Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Say hello to the new guys in NASCAR.

Don't worry if you can't remember them all just yet, because they're coming in one booming wave.

They already made a splash at Daytona — and they're in it to win big over the long haul.

Austin Dillon holds the top spot for the Daytona 500.

Kyle Larson wants to finish as the top rookie in NASCAR.

The two preseason favorites for rookie of the year have to hold off a crowded field of six other drivers — a whopping number for NASCAR — eligible for the award. The new faces have squeezed veteran stalwarts like Jeff Burton and Mark Martin out of rides, leaving open the possibility that Sunday's Daytona 500 could be viewed down the road as one that swept in a new era in NASCAR.

"I don't think there has been a rookie of the year battle in quite a while like this one," Larson said.

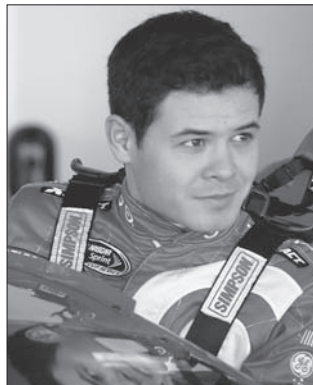
Larson and Dillon are the lynchpins of a class that include Justin Allgaier, Michael Annett, Alex Bowman, Ryan Truex, Parker Kligerman and Cole Whitt.

"Austin Dillon's got to be the favorite for that with everything he has accomplished," Larson said. "If I could beat him I think that would say a lot about myself and our team."

The 21-year-old Larson has been touted as racing's next big shining star for the last few years. Larson ran four races last season as a warm-up for his move to Chip Ganassi Racing to drive the No. 42 Chevrolet. Tony Stewart and Jeff Gordon are among the NASCAR champions that have been wowed by the natural speed, talent and versatility flashed by Larson. Gordon once said, "he makes me look like nothing," at his age.

Larson won a low-level NASCAR developmental series championship in 2012, the first time he raced in stock cars. He finished eighth in the standings with nine top-fives in his first full season in the Nationwide Series.

NASCAR's rookie classes have produced few



stars the last several years. Future Cup champions, Daytona 500 and Brickyard winners Stewart, Matt Kenseth, Kevin Harvick, Ryan Newman and Jamie McMurray each won the award in the late 1990s-early 2000s.

Some lean seasons followed. Juan Pablo Montoya, Kevin Conway, Andy Lally and Stephen Leicht were among the recent underwhelming winners no longer with full-time rides in NASCAR. Ricky Stenhouse Jr., last year's top rookie, is known as much for dating Danica Patrick.

The jury will be out for years on which rookie can truly emerge as the next championship contender.

"In a year from now, we'll know if it changes the guard," Kligerman said. "Next year, Jimmie Johnson, Brad Keselowski, Clint Bowyer, they'll fight for the championship. There will be no difference. Those guys are still here. They're still at the top of the sport."

"In a year, two years, three years, the kids that stick around from this rookie class, they'll be the ones that change the guard and change the sport."

Spoken like a true veteran.



TERRY RENNA/AP

Dale Earnhardt Jr. won the Daytona 500 in 2004, one year after his father tragically died at the same track. Earnhardt Jr. went on to win six races that season, but has only four wins to his credit since then, and no multi-win seasons.

OLYMPICS

Scoreboard

Medals table

At Sochi, Russia Through Saturday, Feb. 22 (% of 96 events)				
Nation	U.S.	S	B	Total
Russia	11	8	9	28
United States	9	11	11	27
Norway	11	5	10	26
Canada	9	10	5	24
Netherlands	8	7	9	24
Germany	8	6	10	24
Austria	4	8	15	27
Finland	4	7	15	26
Sweden	2	6	14	22
Switzerland	3	2	17	22
China	3	2	17	22
South Korea	3	2	8	13
Czech Republic	1	4	2	7
Slovenia	2	2	4	8
Japan	0	2	6	8
Italy	0	2	6	8
Belarus	5	0	1	6
France	1	4	2	7
Finland	1	3	1	5
Australia	0	2	1	3
Latvia	0	1	2	3
Ukraine	1	0	1	2
Slovakia	1	0	1	2
Croatia	0	1	1	2
Kazakhstan	0	1	1	2

Saturday's score

ICE HOCKEY	
Men's Bronze Medal	
Finland 5, United States 0	

Alpine skiing

Saturday At Krasnaya Polyana, Russia	
Men's Slalom Final Ranking	
(First and second runs in parentheses)	
1. Mario Matt, Austria, (1.46; 70, 55.14) 1:41.84.	
2. Marcel Hirscher, Austria, (0.47; 98; 2, 54.14) 1:42.12.	
3. Henrik Kristoffersen, Norway, (15, 48.49; 3, 54.18) 1:42.67.	
4. Fritz Dopfer, Germany, (14, 48.46; 4, 54.26) 1:42.72.	
5. Stefano Gross, Italy, (3, 47.45; 7, 54.27) 1:42.72.	
6. Adam Zampa, Slovakia, (26, 49.34; 1, 52.53) 1:43.50.	
7. Markus Larsson, Sweden, (10, 48.04; 13, 55.46) 1:43.60.	
7. Mattias Hagg, Sweden, (3, 47.45; 16, 55.15) 1:43.60.	
U.S. Finishers	
4. Fritz Dopfer, Warren, VT, (18, 48.49; 2) 1:42.72.	
NR. Ted Ligety, Park City, Utah, (6, 47.56; 20) 1:43.60.	
NR. David Chodounsky, Crested Butte, Colo., DNF.	

Snowboard

Saturday At Krasnaya Polyana, Russia	
Men's Parallel Slalom Semifinals	
Heat 1	
W. (3) Vic Wild, Russia, (+1.12, 0.00).	
L. (1) Benjamin Karl, Austria, (+0.00, +0.04).	
Heat 2	
W. (7) Zan Kosi, Slovenia, (0.00, 0.00).	
L. (13) Aaron March, Italy, (+0.74, +0.94).	
Bronze Medal	
W. (1) Benjamin Karl, Austria, (0.00, 0.00).	
L. (13) Aaron March, Italy, (+0.26, +16.29).	
Gold Medal	
W. (3) Vic Wild, Russia, (0.00, 0.00).	
L. (7) Zan Kosi, Slovenia, (+0.12, +0.11).	
Women's Parallel Slalom Semifinals	
Heat 1	
W. (13) Julia Djumovits, Austria, (0.00, 0.00).	
L. (28) Corinna Boccacini, Italy, (+0.80, +5.18).	
Heat 2	
W. (9) Anke Karstens, Germany, (0.00, 0.00).	
L. (5) Amelie Kober, Germany, (+1.25, +0.09).	
Bronze Medal	
W. (5) Amelie Kober, Germany, (0.00, 0.00).	
L. (28) Corinna Boccacini, Italy, (+0.44, +0.12).	
Gold Medal	
W. (13) Julia Djumovits, Austria, (+0.72, 0.00).	
L. (9) Anke Karstens, Germany, (0.00, +0.12).	

Cross-country skiing

Saturday At Krasnaya Polyana, Russia	
Women's 30km Free (Mass Start)	
1. Marit Bjergen, Norway, 1:11:05.2.	
2. Therese Johaug, Norway, 1:11:07.8.	
3. Kristin Stoenner, Norway, 1:11:28.8.	
4. Kerttu Niskanen, Finland, 1:12:26.9.	
5. Eva Vrabcová - Nytilova, Czech Republic, 1:12:27.1.	
6. Aurora Jean, France, 1:12:27.5.	
7. Coraline Hugue, France, 1:12:29.5.	
8. Emma Wilson, Sweden, 1:12:31.6.	
U.S. Finishers	
24. Liz Stephen, East Montpelier, VT, 1:14:11.8.	
27. Holly Brooks, Anchorage, Alaska, 1:14:11.8.	
28. Kikkan Randall, Anchorage, Alaska, 1:14:10.7.	

40. Jessie Diggins, Afton, Minn., 1:18:13.0.

Biathlon

At Krasnaya Polyana, Russia	
Men's 4x7.5km Relay (Penalties in parentheses)	
1. Russia (Alexey Volkov, Evgeny Ustyugov, Dmitry Malyshko, Anton Shipulin), 1:12:55.9 (0+0).	
2. Germany (Erik Lesser, Daniel Bohm, Arnd Peiffer, Simon Schenck), 1:12:19.4 (0+0).	
3. Austria (Christoph Sumann, Daniel Meschitzsch, Simon Eder, Dominik Landerstinger), 1:12:45.7 (0+0).	
4. Norway (Hauke Boe, Johannes Thingnes Boe, Ole Einar Bjorndalen, Emil Hegle Svendsen), 1:13:03.0 (0+1).	
5. Italy (Christian de Lorenzi, Dominik Windisch, Markus Windisch, Lukas Hofer), 1:13:15.5 (0+0).	
6. Slovenia (Peter Dokl, Jakov Fak, Klemen Bauer, Janez Mario), 1:13:45.1 (0+0).	
7. Canada (Jean-Philippe Le Guellec, Scott Perris, Brendan Green, Nathan Smith), 1:13:46.2 (0+1).	
8. France (Alexis Bœuf, Jean Guillaume Beatrix, Simon Desthieux, Martin Fourcade), 1:13:46.4 (0+0).	
U.S. Finish	
16. United States (Lowell Bailey, Lake Placid, N.Y., Russell Currier, Stockholm, Maine, Sean Doherty, Center Conway, N.H., Leif Nordgren, Marine on St. Croix, Minn.), 1:17:39.1 (3+0).	

Speedskating

At Sochi, Russia	
Men's Team Pursuit Final D	
4. (W) United States (Brian Hansen, Glenlivet, Ill.; Jonathan Kuck, Champaign, Ill.; Joey Mantia, Ocala, Fla.).	
3. (L) Russia (Alexandr Rumyantsev, Evgen Fedorov, Benjamin Mac). 1:13:45.1 (0+0).	
Final C	
3. (W) Norway (Hauke Boekko, Sverre Lund Pedersen, Simon Spieler Nilsen).	
2. (L) Russia (Alexandr Rumyantsev, Aleksey Yelzin, Denis Yuskov).	
Bronze K	
2. (W) Poland (Zbigniew Brodka, Konrad Niedzwiedziak, Jan Szymanski).	
2. (L) Canada (Mathieu Groulx, Lucas Makowsky, Denny Morrison).	
Gold Medal	
1. (W) Netherlands (Jan Blokhuisen, Sven Kramer, Koen Verweij) OR.	
1. (L) South Korea (Jo Hyong Jun, Kim Cheol Min, Lee Seung Hoon).	
Women's Team Pursuit Final D	
4. (W) Norway (Hauke Boekko, Camilla H. Farestveit, Ida Nyatun).	
4. (L) South Korea (Kim Bo Reum, Noh Seon Young, Yang Shin Young).	

3. (W) Canada (Heather Blondin, Malli Christ, Brittany Schussler).

3. (L) United States (Brittany Bowe, Ocala, Fla.; Heather Richardson, High Point, N.C.; Jilleanne Rookard, Woodhaven, Mich.).

2. (W) Russia (Olga Graf, Yekaterina Lobysheva, Yuliya Skokova).

2. (L) Japan (Misaki Ohsigiri, Maki Tabata, Nana Takagi).

1. (W) Netherlands (Marrit Leenstra, Jorjen ter Mors, Ireen Wust) OR.

1. (L) Poland (Katarzyna Bachlodzi-Curus, Katarzyna Wozniak, Zdzisława Złotowska).

Records

At Sochi, Russia
Through Feb. 22

Men	
Speedskating	
5000—Sven Kramer, Netherlands, 6:10.76, Feb. 8, 2014 (Old Record: 6:14.60, Kramer, Vancouver, Feb. 13, 2010).	
10000—Jorrit Bergsma, Netherlands, 12:44.45, Feb. 18, 2014 (Old Record: Lee Seung Hoon, South Korea, 12:58.55, Feb. 23, 2010).	
Short Track	
5000 Relay—Russia (Ruslan Zakharov, Semen Elstrov, Vladimir Gripenov, Victor An), 6:42.100, Feb. 21, 2014 (Old Record: South Korea: Lee Ho-Suk, An Victor, Seo Ho-Jin, Song Suk-Woo, 6:43.376, Feb. 25, 2010).	

Team Pursuit—Netherlands (Jan Blokhuisen, Sven Kramer, Koen Verweij), 3:37.71, Feb. 22, 2014 (Old Record: Netherlands: Jan Blokhuisen, Sven Kramer, Mark Tulter, 3:39.99, Feb. 27, 2010).

5000 Relay—Russia (Ruslan Zakharov, Semen Elstrov, Vladimir Gripenov, Victor An), 6:42.100, Feb. 21, 2014 (Old Record: South Korea: Lee Ho-Suk, An Victor, Seo Ho-Jin, Song Suk-Woo, 6:43.376, Feb. 25, 2010).

Women

500—Lee Sang Hui, South Korea, 37.28, Feb. 11, 2014 (Old Record: 37.30, Catriona Le May Doan, Canada, Feb. 13, 2002).

1500—Jorjen ter Mors, Netherlands, 1:53.51, Feb. 18, 2014 (Old Record: Anni Friesinger, Germany, 1:54.02, Feb. 20, 2002).

2500—Lee Sang Hui, South Korea, 1:14.70, Feb. 11, 2014 (Old Record: Catriona Le May Doan, Canada, 1:14.75, Feb. 14, 2002).

Team Pursuit—Netherlands (Jorjen ter Mors, Lotte van Beek, Ireen Wust), 2:58.05, Feb. 22, 2014 (Old Record: Netherlands: Marrit Leenstra, Jorjen ter Mors, Lotte van Beek, Ireen Wust, 2:58.43, Feb. 22, 2010).

Short Track Speedskating

1000—Valerie Maltais, Canada, 1:28.771, Feb. 18, 2014 (Old Record: Zhou Yang, China, 1:29.048, Feb. 26, 2010).



GREGORIO BORRIGIA/AP

From left, Norway's silver medalist Therese Johaug, Norway's gold medalist Marit Bjergen and Norway's bronze medalist Kristin Stoenner Steira pose during the flowers ceremony Saturday.

Medals roundup

Bjergen leads Norway's sweep

The Associated Press

KRASNAYA POLYANA, Russia — If this was Marit Bjergen's last Olympic race, she couldn't have scripted a better finish.

A sixth gold, two teammates on either side of the podium, and no one above her in the history of the Winter Games.

Bjergen became the most decorated female Winter Olympian in history Saturday by leading a Norwegian sweep in the women's 30-kilometer cross-country ski race at the Sochi Games. It was her third gold of these Olympics and 10th medal overall — putting her ahead of Russian cross-country skier Lyubov Egorova, who had six golds and three silvers.

Being surrounded by her teammates — silver medalist Therese Johaug and bronze-winner Kristin Stoenner Steira — seemed to mean more to Bjergen than her own record.

"It's an incredible day for our team," said Bjergen, who also won three golds in Vancouver four years ago. "When I'm finished skiing I can't think about how many medals I have. But right now it doesn't mean much."

This may well have been her farewell to the sport's biggest stage, though. The 33-year-old Bjergen said she'll make a decision after next year's world championships about whether to continue skiing, but doubted that she'll be in Pyeongchang in 2018.

"Four years is a long time, and I'm not getting younger," Bjergen said. "I'm also thinking about having a family. I don't want to do this at 90 percent."

Bjergen's total medal haul is six golds, three silvers and a bronze. She also has 12 world championship gold medals. Two other women — Stefania Belmondo of Italy and Soviet skier Raisa Smetanina — also have 10 Olympic medals in cross-country, but fewer golds. Soviet speedskater Lidiya Skoblikova had six golds, but no other medals.

Biathlon

KRASNAYA POLYANA, Russia — Russia overcame eight missed targets and the absence of Yevgeny Garanichev to win the men's 4x7.5-kilometer relay on Saturday, sending the home nation top of the Olympic medals table with 11 golds.

Alexey Volkov, Yevgeny Ustyugov and Dmitry Malyshko kept Russia in third position for most of the race before anchor Anton Shipulin beat Germany's Simon Schenck on the final lap.

Russia, now a record seventh-time Olympic relay champion, was 3.5 seconds in front of Germany and 29.8 ahead of bronze medal winner Austria.

The Russians surprisingly left Garanichev out of the team even though he was Russia's only biathlon medalist at the games before the relay. Garanichev won bronze in the individual race.

Defending champion Norway led for most of the competition but dropped to fourth after anchor Emil Hegle Svendsen missed three targets in his final shooting, denying teammate Ole Einar Bjorndalen the chance of winning a record ninth career gold medal in the Winter Olympics. Norway came 54.4 behind in fourth.

Bjorndalen, who was the third starter for Norway, shot flawlessly but still lost 18 seconds of Norway's 20-second lead over Germany.

Shipulin started the final lap 16.6 behind Svendsen and had to reload twice in his prone shooting, but still managed to close the gap with Norway and Germany.

While Svendsen's mistakes put Norway out of contention for the medals, Schenck and Shipulin both shot cleanly and led the shooting range almost simultaneously.

The German stayed in the lead until the final kilometer, when Shipulin overtook him and gradually increased the gap.

Russia's Anton Shipulin celebrates winning the gold medal Saturday after crossing the finish line of the men's biathlon 4x7.5K relay.

KIRSTY WIGGLESWORTH/AP

OLYMPICS

Men's slalom

Austria's Matt has a run for the ages

Skier becomes oldest Alpine champ at 34

By PAT GRAHAM
The Associated Press

KRASNAYA POLYANA, Russia — Mario Matt of Austria won the men's slalom Saturday, becoming the oldest Alpine champion in Olympic history.

Leading after the first run, Matt glided through the slushy course in a combined time of 1 minute, 41.84 seconds in the last Alpine event of the Sochi Olympics. Austrian teammate Marcel Hirscher turned in a blistering final run to take silver, 0.28 behind, and teenager Henrik Kristoffersen of Norway captured bronze.

Matt, who turns 35 in April, surpasses now-retired Norwegian great Kjetil Andre Aamodt as the oldest Alpine skier to win gold. Aamodt was 34 years, 170 days when he won the super-G at the 2006 Turin Games.

Sixth after the opening run, Ted Ligety of the United States fell back on his skis and went off the course. He was far from alone, though. The course set by Ante Kostelic of Croatia was so tough and tricky that five of the last eight skiers went flying off at some point.

The 1.2 finish by Matt and Hirscher helped Austria win the Alpine medal race with nine, including golds from Matth-

ias Mayer in the downhill and Anna Fenninger in the super-G. The Americans finished with five medals and two golds, one by Ligety and the other from 18-year-old Mikaela Shiffrin in the slalom.

This was a stark contrast to the performance by the Austrians in Vancouver four years ago, when the skiing-rich country had only four medals — and none by the men.

This season has been quite a resurgence for Matt. He won his 14th career World Cup slalom race two months ago in Val d'Isere, France — his first win in more than two years.

But this one didn't come easy as Hirscher, arguably the best technical skier in the world, turned in a magnificent run just when it looked like his medal chances were all but finished.

Behind by 1.28 seconds after a lackluster opening run, Hirscher resembled the skier who won the world championship and the overall crown in the discipline.

Before Saturday evening, the Olympics hadn't exactly been kind to Hirscher. He finished a disappointing fourth in the giant slalom last Wednesday. Four years ago in Vancouver, Hirscher was fourth in the giant slalom and fifth in the slalom.



GERO BREILOER/AP

Austria's Mario Matt celebrates winning the gold medal Saturday in the men's slalom at in Krasnaya Polyana, Russia. The slalom was the final Alpine skiing event.

Wild completes sweep in two snowboard events

By WILL GRAVES
The Associated Press

KRASNAYA POLYANA, Russia — Facing a nearly impossible deficit against a four-time world champion he'd never out-musced, all the unorthodox choices snowboarder Vic Wild made to keep his career alive converged over 30 glorious seconds of perfection.

His banged-up body patched together by the best doctors his adopted country can provide, his perfectly assembled board riding like a lightning bolt, his newfound fans screaming his name and waving a very different kind of red, white and blue, the man who eschewed his homeland for his heart, made Olympic history.

Gold for Russia. Again. And maybe more than a little vindication too.

Wild rallied to victory in the men's parallel slalom on Saturday, stunning Austria's Benjamin Karl in the semifinal then edging Zan Kosir by .11 seconds to cap four dizzying days that validated his decision three years ago to marry Russian snowboarder Alena Zavarzina and move to Moscow with his talent in tow.

The 27-year-old native of White Salmon, Wash., but now residing in Moscow won the parallel giant slalom Wednesday then booked it with an even more stunning triumph in the Olympic debut of the shorter, trickier parallel slalom race.

The roars of "Vitya!" still ringing in his ears after a raucous flower celebration, Wild exhaled; the pressure valve that's



JAC C. HONG/AP

Russia's Vic Wild competes in the men's snowboard parallel slalom final in Krasnaya Polyana, Russia. Wild won the gold medal, his second of the Sochi Games.

been a fixture in his life since he left the U.S. was finally released.

"I continued snowboarding because I thought I could do something special," he said. "I thought I had never reached my potential (in the U.S.) and I wanted to see how good I could get. That's why I'm a Russian."

Yep, a "full-on Russian," as his brother, Mike, calls him.

One who was burned out and frustrated by a lack of attention from the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association, which pours more resources into the halfpipe and slopestyle, where Americans captured five medals.

Wild's relationship with Zavarzina led to

a Siberian wedding in 2011. His new passport provided better support from a lightly regarded Russian team anxious to make a splash in Sochi.

It culminated in the kind of success Wild refused to dream about while competing for his native country. He even received congratulations Saturday from President Vladimir Putin, who praised Wild for proving that "sports fate smiles on the most talented, driven and strongest in spirit."

Wild's win in the PGS came 10 minutes after his wife earned bronze in the same event. Zavarzina didn't make it out of the elimination round on Saturday, but was there at the finish line as her husband put together the run of a lifetime.

A rare miscue in the first round of the semifinals left Wild trailing Karl by 1.12 seconds — the equivalent of a football team losing by 10 with 1 minute left.

Sprinting down the decidedly faster blue course, Wild's hand crossed the line a scant .04 ahead of Karl. Wild flexed in euphoria after finally topping the 2010 silver medalist.

"I thought this would be a great place to beat him for the first time," Wild said. "It's one of best experiences I ever had on the snowboard."

He did it on a busted shin that received treatment from the Russian Olympic hockey team doctor — and on a snowboard assembled by a wax technician who turned it into a five-foot bullet.

AP National Writer Eddie Pells contributed to this report.

OLYMPICS

Men's hockey

Finland blanks US in bronze medal game

Americans go home empty-handed after dropping their last two games

By LARRY LAGE
The Associated Press

SOCHI, Russia — The Finnish Flash finished off his sixth Olympics with a sweet victory.

Selanne scored two goals and Tuukka Rask had a 27-save shutout, helping Finland rout the United States 5-0 Saturday to win hockey bronze at the Sochi Games.

Selanne and Jussi Jokinen scored 11 seconds apart early in pivotal second period. The Finns had three goals in the third against a team that looked like it would rather be at home.

Finnish forward Mikael Granlund said he's thrilled that Selanne, his idol, capped his Olympic career with a victory.

"He's 43 years old and can still play at this level," said the 21-year-old Granlund. "You can't understand how important he is for Finland."

Finland has won four medals in the last five Olympics, more than any other nation in the NHL era.

Before the match became a rout in the final period, it was a game of missed opportunities for the Americans.

Patrick Kane couldn't convert on a penalty shot in each of the first two periods. He missed the net to the right on his first one-on-one duel and hit the right crossbar on his second.

"The first one kind of rolled on me; I thought I had him," he said. "The second one I made a good shot and it just hit the post. I had some chances today, I just didn't

really capitalize on anything."

Kane, who also missed a breakaway in overtime against Russia, said Saturday's setback was one of the most frustrating games of his career.

"Whether it was confidence or not getting enough chances, who really knows at the end of the day?" he said. "I thought I had opportunities. Obviously, it would have been nice burying that breakaway against Russia and (then) you get two penalty shots.

"You think you're in three times against the goaltender alone and hopefully you could score a couple of times out of that. It just wasn't meant to be."

No, it wasn't.

The Americans wasted a chance to earn medals in consecutive Olympic hockey tournaments for the first time since winning gold in 1960 and silver in 1956.

Finland, meanwhile, took advantage of two power plays in the third period with goals to put the U.S. away in a game it didn't look interested in competing in after falling behind 2-0.

If the league and players' union do not let the world's best players go to South Korea in four years, Kane and Co. may never get a shot to help the Americans win gold that has been elusive since the 1980 "Miracle on Ice."

Jonathan Quick, starting ahead of silver-medal winning goaltender Ryan Miller, stopped all eight shots that got to him in the first before giving up five goals on just 21 shots over the last two periods.



MATT SLOCUM/AP

Finland's Teemu Selanne scores on United States goalkeeper Jonathan Quick during the second period of the bronze medal game in Sochi, Russia.

Dutch complete record haul, add two speedskating golds

By PAUL NEWBERRY
The Associated Press

SOCHI, Russia — The final day of speedskating at the Sochi Olympics was nothing more than a victory lap for the mighty Dutch.

The Netherlands capped its dominant performance with two more gold medals Saturday in team pursuit, bringing the nation's haul to a staggering eight golds and 23 medals overall.

"What a kick!" Jan Blokhuijsen said.

The Dutch men cruised through the semifinals and finals, pulling away from South Korea to win gold with an Olympic record time of 3 minutes, 37.71 seconds. Blokhuijsen, Sven Kramer and Koen Verweij raised their clasped hands in triumph, taking the country's first gold ever in pursuit and making up for heavily favored teams that flopped in both 2006 and 2010.

"In Vancouver, things went bad, so tension was high coming into the race," Kramer said. "We knew how to do this, and also how tough this is."

Then, in the only imaginable way for this competition to end, the women blew away Poland with their third Olympic record time in three races. Ireen Wust, Jorien ter Mors and Marrit Leenstra were like a runaway train, leading by more than a second and a half after the first half-lap and steadily building the advantage from there, winning by more than 7 seconds in 2:58.05.

Wust became the first athlete at these Winter

Games with five medals — two golds and three silvers.

The Netherlands turned in a performance that may never be duplicated, taking nearly twice as many medals at the oval as every other nation combined.

While former powerhouses such as Norway and the United States didn't win even a single medal in Sochi, the team in orange turned this into essentially the Dutch trials.

The eight golds in 12 events broke the previous record of six golds by the Soviet speedskaters at the 1960 Winter Games. The total medals blew away the old mark of 13 by the East Germans at the 1988 Calgary Olympics.

The only consolation for everyone else in team pursuit: There was no way for the Dutch to hoard all the medals, as they did in four individual events.

South Korea seemed more than thrilled with its silver on the men's side, with Poland rallying to beat Canada for the bronze.

"We knew that the Dutch would be champion, but we still had to fight for a result," South Korea's Lee Seung-hoon said.

Poland assured another medal in the women's race by winning in the semifinals. But there was no stopping the Dutch, so silver was really the best anyone could do. The bronze went to Russia, which defeated Japan in the third-place race, pumping up the home crowd in really the only dramatic moment of the day.



PATRICK SEMANSKY/AP

Speedskaters from the Netherlands, top to bottom, Koen Verweij, Jan Blokhuijsen and Sven Kramer skate their way to gold in the men's team pursuit Saturday at in Sochi, Russia.

SPORTS

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Inside:

- US men sent home empty-handed, Page 31
- Wild completes sweep, Page 30



NASCAR

Last best chance?

After strong finish to '13 season, this may be Junior's year

By MARK LONG
The Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla.

It's been a decade since Dale Earnhardt Jr.'s lone Daytona 500 victory.

He's come close so many times since, even finishing second three of the last four years, but has yet to make that coveted drive down pit road and into Victory Lane.

No one should be surprised to find him

back there Sunday.

Forget that Denny Hamlin and Matt Kenseth have won the first three Sprint Cup races during Speedweeks. Disregard that Richard Childress Racing has pole-sitter Austin Dillon, who is driving the No. 3 made famous by Earnhardt's late father, as well as three other stout cars.

Ignore that anything can and often does happen at Daytona International Speedway.

This just might be Junior's year.

The 39-year-old driver seems primed for his best season ever, and it starts at the track forever linked to his family name because of triumph and tragedy.

"I'm excited about

getting back out there," Earnhardt said. "I'm looking forward to seeing how we can do and how our performance is going to be right off the bat. It's going to be a fun year, I think. I think we're going to enjoy ourselves. We did last year. We seem to get better every year, and hopefully that trajectory is still the same going into this season."

Earnhardt was fifth in points last season, his best showing since finishing third in 2003. And had NASCAR already switched to its new points system, Earnhardt would have won his first Cup championship.

He had eight top-10 finishes in the 10-race Chase, hitting his stride just a few weeks too late to catch Hendrick Motorsports teammate Jimmie Johnson. Johnson edged Kenseth for his sixth title in the last eight seasons.

SEE JUNIOR ON PAGE 28

"We seem to get better every year, and hopefully that trajectory is still the same going into this season."

Dale Earnhardt Jr.
NASCAR Sprint Cup driver

Dale Earnhardt Jr. watches from the top of his transporter Wednesday during practice for Sunday's NASCAR Daytona 500 at Daytona International Speedway in Daytona Beach, Fla.

TERRY RENNA/AP